



A Theory Evaluation of Action Volunteers Africa's Career Guidance Programme

Student:

Robert Waswaga

WSWROB001

Supervisor:

Dr Carren Duffy

A research dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
Degree of Master of Philosophy in Programme Evaluation

School of Management Studies

Faculty of Commerce

University of Cape Town

2024

COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this research proposal from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Signature: _____

Signed by candidate

Date: November 22nd, 2024

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations.....	6
Acknowledgments.....	7
Abstract.....	8
Chapter One: Introduction	10
Youth Unemployment in South Africa.....	10
<i>Causes of Youth Unemployment</i>	10
<i>Solutions to Addressing Youth Unemployment</i>	13
Action Volunteers Africa.....	14
<i>Life Matters Programme</i>	14
Career Guidance Programme Description.....	15
Purpose and Specific Objectives.	15
Career Guidance Programme Activities.	15
Target Audience.	16
Programme Participant Selection.	16
Programme Duration.	16
Programme Delivery.....	16
Programme Evaluation.....	17
Problem Statement.....	17
Evaluation Scope	17
Evaluation Objectives.....	17
Evaluation Questions.....	18
Chapter 2: Method	19
Step 1: Gathering Preliminary Information and Constructing the Initial Programme Theory..	19
Step 2: Develop the Initial Programme Theory of the AVA’s Career Guidance Programme	21
Step 3: Presentation of the Programme Theory	21
Step 4: Plausibility Check of the Initial Programme Theory	21
Step 5: Final Theory of Change	26
Ethical Considerations.....	26
Data Analysis.....	27
Data Management Plan	28
Chapter 3: Results.....	29

Initial Programme Theory	29
Extracted Career Guidance Programme Theory	29
Assumptions.	31
Description of the Causal Pathways of Initial Programme Theory.	32
<i>Pathways between the outputs and the short-term outcomes.</i>	32
<i>Pathways between short-term and medium-term outcomes</i>	33
<i>Pathways between medium-term outcomes and impact</i>	34
Literature Review on Career Guidance Efficacy and Programme Theory	35
Literature Review on Career Guidance Efficacy.....	35
Career Guidance Inputs.....	36
Career Guidance Intervention Activities.....	36
Career Guidance Outputs.....	37
Immediate Outcomes of Career Guidance Interventions.....	37
Intermediate Outcome of Career Guidance Interventions.	40
Impact of Career Guidance Interventions.....	42
Career Guidance Assumptions.....	47
External Factors Influencing Career Guidance Efficacy.	47
Plausibility Check of Initial Programme Theory and Literature Review Findings	49
Career Guidance Standards	53
Overview of Career Guidance Theories	54
Social Cognitive Theory.....	55
Learning Theory of Career Choice and Counselling.	56
Traits and Factor Theory.	57
Occupational Orientation Theory.....	57
Developmental Self-Concept Theory.....	58
Theory of Personality Development and Career Choice.	58
Results from Primary Data Collection.....	59
<i>The Value of the Career Guidance Programme</i>	59
<i>Outcomes of Career Guidance</i>	62
Short-term Outcomes.	62
Medium-term Outcomes.	66
Long-Term Outcomes.	69

Motivating Factors for Effective Youth Participation in the Career Guidance Programme.	70
External Factors.	71
Areas for Improvement in AVA's Career Guidance Programme.....	71
Chapter 4: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations	74
Plausibility of the Initial Programme Theory	74
Career Guidance Programme Resources/Inputs	74
Career Guidance Activities	74
Programme Outputs	75
Short-term Outcomes.....	75
Medium-term Outcomes.....	76
Impact of Career Guidance Programme	78
Programme Assumptions	78
External Factors Influencing Career Guidance	79
<i>Career Guidance Standards</i>	80
<i>Use Of Social Science Career Development Theories</i>	80
Alignment To Learning Theory Of Career Choice And Counselling.....	81
Alignment To Other Career Guidance Theories.....	82
<i>Occurrence of Short-Term Outcomes of Career Guidance</i>	83
Limitations of the Research.....	83
Recommendations	83
Final Programme Theory.....	84
Programming Recommendations	86
Areas For Further Research.....	87
Conclusion.....	87
References.....	89
Appendices	97
Appendix A. AVA Document Review Guide for Initial Programme Theory	97
Appendix B. Workshop Agenda and Guiding Questions	98
Appendix C. Procedure for Stakeholder Workshop for Development of Initial Programme Theory	101
Appendix D. Meeting Agenda and Guiding for Validation of Initial Programme Theory of the Career Guidance Programme	103

Appendix E. Document Review Guide for Similar Career Guidance Interventions	105
Appendix F. Document Review Guide for social science theory/principles of career guidance	106
Appendix G. Focus Group Discussion Guide for Programme Participants (Targeted Youth)	107
Appendix H. Interview Schedule for AVA Implementers and Staff.....	110
Appendix I. Synthesis Guiding Questions	112
Appendix J. Introduction and Consent Letter	113
Appendix K: Data Management Plan.....	115

List of Figures

Figure 1	30
Figure 2	46
Figure 3	73
Figure 4	85

List of Tables

Table 1	50
---------------	----

List of Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
AVA	Action Volunteers Africa
CG&C	Career Guidance and Counselling
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
LMF	Life Matters Foundation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYS	National Youth Service
ToC	Theory of Change
TQM	Total Quality Management
YeB	YearBeyond
YES	Youth Employment Service

Acknowledgments

The production of this dissertation has been a long journey. In this journey there are people who have been resourceful and provided invaluable support. I am indebted to such people. My utmost appreciation goes to my supervisor, Carren Duffy (PhD), for her technical guidance, insights and mentorship during the research. I feel inspired by the level of dedication and mentorship I have received from Carren. I will forever be grateful for this support.

I also extend my gratitude to Kenro Team Consults Limited for paying my tuition and affording space to study and fulfil my academic responsibilities. My colleagues at office, thank you for stepping in when I was not available and when I needed support.

My immediate family, thank you for giving me the space and encouraging me whenever academic demands arose. In a special way, I want to thank my dad (Samuel Waswaga, RIP) and mum (Esther Loy Namugwe) for showing me the right way. Dad, the awards you gave me for achieving the targets we agreed on during my primary and lower secondary education have culminated into my academic success. Mum, you sacrificed your meagre resources to enable me attend school. Thank you so much. You and dad believed in and supported my initial academic endeavours as you could see the value of education before, I comprehended it. Your initial efforts and sacrifices set firm foundation which remains a cornerstone for my academic success.

To you all, I thank you!

Abstract

This research presents an evaluation of a youth unemployment initiative. Action Volunteers Africa (AVA) implements a Career Guidance Programme in Western Cape, South Africa. The Programme targets unemployed male and female youth aged 18-25 who have completed matric and live in urban areas. Career guidance is embedded in all the Life Matters Programme. The programme uses a variety of activities to help youth identify their career aspirations, build competencies, and gain work experience through volunteering, so that they are better prepared to enter the job market. The programme's current design, however, has been based on AVA's internal learning experiences with the programme. No design and implementation choices have been derived from social science research or best practice approaches. The client wanted to assess whether the theory of their programme was plausible, compared to other successful career guidance programmes, and whether any improvements were necessary to strengthen the causal logic between their activities and intended outcomes. Accordingly, a theory evaluation of the programme was undertaken.

The theory evaluation was guided by five theory-driven evaluation steps prescribed by Donaldson (2007). The evaluation entailed document review, extracting initial programme theory, conducting a plausibility check using a literature review and stakeholder feedback to produce a refined plausible programme theory of the programme.

Overall, the initial programme theory was found to be plausible. Most components of the programme theory suggested good alignment to similar interventions. The programme has clearly articulated pathways between different components of its theory. AVA's Career Guidance Programme aligns with different career development, counselling and learning theories. The programme's quality assurance is supported by regular feedback, the use of qualified personnel, and the specification of outputs and outcomes.

The research suggested that short-term outcomes have been achieved thus far by programme participants, supporting the inclusion of these outcomes in the programme's theory of change. These outcomes included: self-awareness (in several contexts including passion, career choice, etc), self-discipline, and different behaviours that demonstrated motivation and youth effort to seek employment or further education.

Following the extensive theory evaluation, an adjusted programme theory was presented to inform future programming. The findings emphasised the need for AVA to develop career

guidance standards to inform its practice and also, expand its scope of activities to meet the emerging needs of targeted youth. These recommendations included exposure to more careers, the use of job shadowing, coaching, and linking interns to education opportunities.

Key words: Career guidance, guidance standards, programme plausibility, Programme theory, Theory evaluation, theory in practice.

Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation reports on a theory evaluation of the Career Guidance Programme implemented by Action Volunteers Africa in Western Cape, South Africa. This chapter provides a background of youth unemployment in South Africa. The programme description will follow this, and the chapter will conclude with the evaluation scope. Extensive literature review findings on career guidance efficacy, underlying programme theories and principles, and career development theories are presented in the results chapter.

Youth Unemployment in South Africa

In 2022, the population of South Africa was estimated at 60.6 million people, with young people aged 15-34 accounting for 33.1% of this population (Statistics South Africa, 2023). The high youth unemployment rate remains a key national problem in South Africa. In 2022, the youth unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 was estimated at 51.52%, while for those aged 25-34 it was estimated at 40% (Statistics South Africa, 2023). Without addressing youth unemployment, South Africa cannot fully draw benefits from its youth population. Several studies have been undertaken to understand causes and propose interventions to address youth unemployment.

Causes of Youth Unemployment

Mago (2018) affirmed that a combination of explanatory variables offer explanation for youth unemployment in South Africa. Dagume and Gyekye (2016) argue that a competence-based training and practical exposure to work accounts for youth unemployment in South Africa. Dagume and Gyekye (2016) asserted that skilling opportunities and apprenticeships contributed to alleviating the problem. These observations by Dagume and Gyekye (2016) concur with findings by Van Aardt (2012). According to these studies, youth unemployment is explained by a lack of employable skills and work exposure, which are critical prerequisites for employers hiring workers. Youth unemployment can also be linked to inadequate vocational skills required to execute workplace tasks. This lack of skills is embedded in the ineffective and unfair education system in South Africa that produces ill-equipped graduates (Mayo, 2018).

Other researchers attribute youth unemployment to a mismatch between labour supply and demand. According to Bhorat et al. (2006), high youth unemployment is attributed to the change in the structure of the South African economy, which was not matched with a change in the country's human resource planning. Since the mid-1990s, the South African economy has transformed from extractive sectors, which were dependent on mass labour, into service sectors, which require few highly skilled personnel (Bhorat et al., 2006). Unemployed youth are unable to take up jobs on offer due to a lack of these high-level technical skills required by service sectors in South Africa (Bhorat et al., 2006; Jubane, 2020).

Linked to this, as noted by Patel et al., (2020), Bhorat et al. (2006), and Marumo and Sebolaaneng (2016), youth unemployment is mainly explained by excess supply of degree level workers who hold competences not needed by employers. This means that the skills being supplied (graduates) are not the ones needed by potential employers. Accordingly, the unmarketability of acquired employment skills further exacerbates youth unemployment in South Africa.

Youth unemployment can also be explained from a macroeconomic perspective. Rapid increase in the youth population does not match with the corresponding economic growth accounts for youth unemployment in South Africa (Baah-Boateng, 2016). The growth in the youth population has essentially outpaced job generation as reflected in the slow economic growth. In other words, the supply of labour exceeds the demand for work, which creates youth unemployment in South Africa.

In addition, youth unemployment can also be explained by other diverse factors such as high costs of job-seeking efforts (transport and printing), inability to access information due to lack of affordability of internet/data fees, lack of informal connections to support job pursuits, household chores (women), and unrealistic salary expectations such as quest for excessive remunerations (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; see also Patel et al., 2020).

Youth unemployment in South Africa is also elucidated by young people's social contexts and the level of wage offers by employers (Webb, 2021). From the studies, low wages do not attract young people into employment. Young people's backgrounds in terms of race and stigmatisations linked to the representation of places (such as unplanned settlements) affect employment of young people (Webb, 2021). Studies also show that national employment policies

such as national minimum wage could inspire unemployed persons into job searches, but these are rendered ineffective due to excessive needs of disadvantaged young people (Patel et al., 2020).

Yu (2013) sheds some light on the role of places in determining youth unemployment in South Africa. Youth who resided in more prosperous provinces were more likely to take up employment than those from poorer regions. This could be attributed to higher employment opportunities and better education in certain areas.

Additionally, Borat et al. (2006) introduced demographic characteristics of youth in South Africa into youth unemployment narrative. Factors such as age, years of education (skills level), race (African versus coloured), gender and location are determinants of unemployment in South Africa. Ismail and Kollamparambil (2015) also added time spent out of work and the age of men as dimensions to understanding youth unemployment in South Africa.

Besides employable skills, work experience, and other contextual factors, there is also evidence that points to a deficit of soft skills as a key explanatory factor of youth unemployment in South Africa. Kaburise (2016) identified a graduate's ability to communicate effectively as a significant factor that influences whether they get employed or not. The extent to which youth articulate their abilities determines whether they are hired for work or not (Kaburise, 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to increasing youth unemployment in South Africa since 2020. The spike in unemployment was associated with an eight percent contraction of the South African economy for the year 2020, primarily due to the national lockdowns (Nsomba et al, 2021). According to World Bank (2024) data, youth unemployment increased from 43.50% in 2019 to 49.87% in 2020. The youth unemployment rate remained above the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period in 2023 at 49.8% (Statistics SA, 2023). COVID-19 lockdowns led to closure of business and lay-off of workers which contributed to increasing unemployment among youth (Chetty et al., 2022). It is reported that every two in three job losses in South Africa in first quarter of 2020 and second quarter of 2021 was among young people compared to one in every job lost before COVID-19 (Altman, 2022). Mseleku (2022) observes that COVID-19 contributed to a surge in job losses and that reversing this trend will depend on the recovery in South African economy. Embedded in the recovery are different opportunities which youth can

take advantage of to create businesses and secure employment for themselves (Chetty et al., 2022). All the information presented highlights the importance of addressing youth employment.

Solutions to Addressing Youth Unemployment

Research on youth unemployment in South Africa is awash with different suggestions for tackling the problem. Some of the interventions are at the policy level, while some are at a programmatic level, as further detailed below.

Graham and Mlatsheni (2015) give examples of interventions undertaken by Government and Non-Governmental Organisations to tackle youth unemployment in South Africa. The South African Government adopted a National Youth Policy (2015-2020) to streamline government response to youth unemployment. Under this policy, different interventions, such as The National Youth Service (NYS) programme run by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), have been undertaken. Additionally, tax incentives to companies hiring youth workers and offering a minimum wage, among others, have been implemented (Graham and Mlatsheni, 2015). NGOs are also offering learnerships to offer youth work readiness skills and employment placements to curb youth unemployment (Graham and Mlatsheni, 2015).

Dagume and Gyekye (2016) proposed different interventions to address youth unemployed in South Africa. These proposals include setting up training programme and providing adequate funds to them, fusing learning and long-term work-based trainings (Dagume and Gyekye, 2016). Work-based trainings point to volunteering options that expose youth to making career choices.

Mago (2018) recommended that the education system be revamped to be skill-focused and target youth from poor backgrounds. Other suggestions to mitigate youth unemployment included generating employment, skill improvement of the youth, and extending support to youth business start-ups. There is a suggestion to address personal communication attributes of youth as a critical determinant for youth employment (Kaburise, 2016). However, a multi-intervention package is appropriate to effectively address youth unemployment in South Africa (Mago, 2016).

Studies also point to the need to undertake extensive guidance activities as to narrow the gaps between what universities produce and what is demanded by employers (Mago, 2016). From these studies, career guidance was viewed as an antidote to youth unemployment in South Africa.

A host of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) offer varied interventions, including learnership programmes which equip youth with skills and work readiness. Other NGOs provide the community with youth development and management programmes (Graham and Mlatsheni, 2015). Action Volunteers Africa is one of the NGOs which offers career guidance to unemployed youth as an intervention in addressing youth unemployment.

Action Volunteers Africa

Action Volunteers Africa (AVA) is a social enterprise initiated in 2012, which commenced its first volunteering project in 2013 (AVA, 2020). AVA is currently funded through grants and partnerships. Life Matters Foundation (LMF) is one of partners (AVA, 2020).

AVA's response to youth unemployment in South Africa entail utilisation of volunteering as a key intervention. Youth (aged 18 – 25) are placed in full-time work-based placements on volunteering terms and with organisations engaged in different services. These work-based experiences are enriched by a unique personal, professional and progression training. Career guidance and coaching is at the centre of this approach. AVA envisions, "Youth are empowered to become economically independent and socially responsible citizens" (AVA, 2020, p.2).

Life Matters Programme

Life Matters Programme is a partnership between AVA and the Life Matters Foundation (LMF, which was initiated in 2017 (AVA, 2020). The LMF focuses on improving education outcomes for communities served by five schools in Cape Town in the Capricorn, Steenberg, Westlake and Retreat (AVA, 2020). The programme employs youth from the community to teach pupils in lower primary (Grades 2 and 3) in targeted schools. These youth must meet a minimum academic requirement of completing matric with a score of at least 50% in mathematics and English (AVA, 2020). AVA's programming role entails preparation, selection undertaking implementation and monitoring of intervention activities.

Through this experience, the youth work readiness skills and become ready to secure employment while at the same time contributing to increased numeracy and literacy levels of the pupils. Volunteering also enables youth to develop better clarity on suitable career path.

Career Guidance Programme Description.

The Career Guidance Programme is embedded in the Life Matters Programme which commenced in 2017. Through this programme, the targeted youth are placed in tutoring opportunities on volunteering terms. Through these hands-on experiences, the youth develop and consolidate competencies which make them work and career ready. This experience is expected to contribute to enabling youth secure employment after participation in the programme and improve their welfare in the long run. Volunteering work-based placements contribute to enabling youth to assess and choose which career path is suitable for them.

Purpose and Specific Objectives.

The specific objectives of the AVA's Career Guidance Programme are threefold:

1. To enable youth to gain clarity of career options;
2. To allow the youth to identify and research possible career pathways (including work, study and entrepreneurship); and
3. To enable youth to make empowered choices for future career progression.

Career Guidance Programme Activities.

The activities of the Career Guidance Programme are structured around three phases:

Phase One - Self-Understanding and Visioning: This involves the youth reflecting on who they are, as well as their personal goals and objectives. As part of phase one, the youth carry out a project that explores career options, and they create an action plan for their future with guidance from AVA mentors.

Phase Two - Working in Teams: This phase includes theoretical training on group ethics. The youth embark on a group assignment while working simultaneously on the skills they need to develop for the workplace.

Phase Three - Me in the World: For phase three, the youth explore e-learning networks and are exposed to job opportunities. As part of this phase, they also create their curriculum vitae and prepare motivational letters for future employers.

Within each phase, there are a series of assignments and one-on-one discussions. AVA also hosts open days where youth are exposed to employment opportunities existing within the local economy or environment.

Target Audience.

The Career Guidance Programme is targeted at youth aged 18-25 who are unemployed. The targeted youth must have completed matric with a score of at least 50% in mathematics and English. The 2020-2022 programme cohorts had 46 participants, 83% female and 17% male. All targeted youth live in urban areas in the Western Cape, but targeted communities include those with high crime and low-income households.

Programme Participant Selection.

The Career Guidance Programme participants are the same as the Life Matters Programme. The procedure for selection entails running mass media and online adverts, submission of applications, shortlisting as per the programme criteria, sitting of aptitude test and oral interviews and selection. Selected candidates are only requested to submit acceptance letters. Participants are then offered contracts and have the right to withdraw from the programme if they change their mind or change in expectations.

Programme Duration.

The Career Guidance Programme is implemented for a period of 12 months. During this period selected youth are exposed to the tutoring programme and different components of career guidance interventions.

Programme Delivery.

The career guidance programme is delivered through structured and unstructured interventions. Structured interventions entail individual or group-based tasks set by AVA. Unstructured interventions comprise one-on-one interventions such as coaching and mentoring interventions and exposure to open events (career expo) delivered by AVA facilitators or host organisation staff. Career guidance activities are implemented by AVA staff, career guidance facilitators (resource persons) and supervisors at host organisations.

Programme Evaluation

Problem Statement

Since the inception of AVA, career guidance to targeted youth has been embedded in all its interventions. AVA has a set of activities and processes based on their experience in delivering the career guidance package. The career guidance package, however, has not been derived from social science research or best practice examples. Its design has been informally developed over the years into what it is today. AVA doesn't know how its career guidance component compares to best practice. Accordingly, the student evaluator was asked to conduct a theory evaluation for the Career Guidance Programme of AVA. AVA asked for the evaluation to focus specifically on the career guidance component of the Life Matters programme.

Evaluation Scope

Theory-based evaluation involves a deeper study of an intervention and the mechanisms that mediate programme processes and results (Rossi et al., 2004). The investigation contributes to a better understanding of when and how interventions work (Rogers & Weiss, 2007). This theory evaluation aimed to assess the logic and plausibility of the Career Guidance Programme, as well as validate the suitability of AVA's approach to Career Guidance. This is achieved by comparing AVA's package of Career Guidance with other similar interventions and social science literature and research (Rossi et al., 2004). A typical theory evaluation would limit the plausibility assessment to a comparison of literature (Rossi et al., 2004; see also Wholey et al., 2004). However, to make the assessment more robust a small component was added to the theory evaluation which assessed whether any short-term outcomes of the programme were being observed. By investigating whether some short-term outcomes are being achieved, it allows one to state more conclusively that the intended outcomes as included in the theory of change are achievable and plausible.

Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation seeks:

1. To extract and document the initial programme theory (which includes the action and change model).
2. To benchmark AVA's Career Guidance Programme's programme theory and approach with other Career Guidance Programmes as well as social science principles for such interventions.
3. To identify areas for improvement in the AVA's Career Guidance Programme's programme theory.
4. To refine the programme theory; and finally
5. To conclude whether any short-term outcomes of the programme have been observed.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation sought to answer the following questions to achieve its objective:

1. How does AVA's Career Guidance Programme fare compared to other similar programmes?
2. How does AVA's Career Guidance Programme compare to social science theory/standards for career guidance interventions?
3. What short term outcomes have been achieved to date because of participating in the career guidance which would support their inclusion as intended outcomes in the theory of change?
4. Is the programme's underlying logic plausible?
5. What changes can be implemented to improve the logic of AVA's Career Guidance Programme theory?

Chapter 2: Method

To conduct the theory-based evaluation, the evaluator combined the five-step theory-driven evaluation prescribed by Donaldson (2007) which provides a systematic and practical approach to conducting a plausibility check of interventions with the six steps suggested by Van Belle et al. (2020). The combination of these two approaches is unique and was chosen to enrich the theory evaluation. Donaldson (2006) proposes the following five steps: 1) engage stakeholders, 2) data collection to extract theory, 3) developing a draft ToC, 4) conducting the plausibility assessment with social science literature and research, and 5) finalising the ToC. Van Belle et al.'s (2010) steps are similar. They include: Step 1: Assessing the scope of the evaluation, Step 2: Critical construction of an initial ToC, Step 3: choosing data collection methods, Step 4: Assessing the programme's design and implementation; Step 5: Assessing the causal mechanisms of the ToC, and Step 6: Translating the findings into a refined ToC.

As shown above the steps in both 'models' are similar. The only real difference is that Van Belle et al. (2010) allows for additional data to be collected to support the plausibility assessment. Because of this, the collection of short-term outcome data was included as part of the theory evaluation – not to conduct an outcomes evaluation, but rather to support the outcomes' inclusion in the ToC as feasible, intended outcomes. The steps are presented below were designed by the evaluation, taking into account the suggestions/steps of both Donaldson (2006) and Van Belle et al. (2020).

Step 1: Gathering Preliminary Information and Constructing the Initial Programme

Theory

Step one involved collecting relevant information to construct a programme theory for the Career Guidance Programme. The focus was to make explicit what the stakeholders expected the programme to do and how the programme was expected to work (Van Belle et al., 2010). This information was gathered through the review of documentation (Sub-step 1) and stakeholder engagement (Sub-step 2).

Sub-Step 1.1: Review of Programme Documents

This sub-step aimed to enable the evaluator to understand the Career Guidance Programme in terms of its design and what it was expected to achieve. During this step, the researcher reviewed programme documents such as the implementation manuals, activity concept notes, activity reports, annual evaluation reports and AVA's annual programme reports for 2017 and 2019. These documents were accessed from AVA's website or obtained from AVA. Upon reviewing the information, the evaluator was able to draft an initial programme theory as reflected in accessed documents. This programme theory was not presented to the stakeholders during the stakeholder workshop (discussed later). It was, however, done as a validity check to ensure that when the stakeholders developed their version of a programme theory diagram, no elements or components of the programme theory were left out. Any gaps or missing gaps were flagged to participants after their initial programme theory for discussion.

A document review guide presented in Appendix A was used to support the review of documents in line with evaluation questions.

Sub-step 1.2: Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement involved supporting four AVA programme staff who were involved in the Career Guidance Programme to elicit underlying assumptions of the programme and draft an initial programme theory. The stakeholder workshop was attended by four participants: the Executive Director, Programme Assistant and two programme volunteers. Non-probability purposive sampling was chosen to select these individuals for the stakeholder engagement step. All four were deemed to be best positioned to be able to explain what their implicit assumptions about the career guidance programme were and overall what the programme was aiming to achieve.

This consultation took place in an in-person workshop with the AVA staff. During the workshop, AVA staff were able to articulate their perspectives on what the programme was expected to do and how it was expected to work. Programme staff were purposively sampled based on their role in the designing and implementation of the Career Guidance Programme. The draft programme theory diagram is presented in the results chapter (Figure 1).

Procedure.

The stakeholder workshop was guided by a schedule of activities or programme. The workshop was structured around four sessions. These comprised preliminaries, group work, plenary discussions and reflections. The complete workshop programme can be found in Appendix B which guided the discussion around the four sessions. Additional description of the workshop procedure is presented in Appendix C.

Step 2: Develop the Initial Programme Theory of the AVA's Career Guidance Programme

This step aimed at helping the evaluator to draw up and refine the output from Step 1 for presentation to the stakeholders for adoption. In addition to putting the programme theory diagram together, the evaluator wrote a narrative that explains the programme theory, entailing an embedded Theory of Change (ToC). A ToC narrative essentially identifies the processes and inherent causal linkages between the different elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, external factors) in a programme theory (Rossi et al., 2004).

Step 3: Presentation of the Programme Theory

A virtual meeting was organised with the evaluator and the stakeholders were involved in the workshop. The programme theory diagram (output from Step 2) was mailed to participants one week before the meeting for review.

The meeting kicked off with a short presentation of the drafted programme theory. A discussion and reflection on different elements in the draft followed this. The questions asked in this meeting are presented in Appendix D. Based on these discussions, changes and adjustments were made by introducing one extra short-term result and adjusting casual links for three outcomes. The adjusted theory of change was adopted as the initial programme theory, which was then subjected to an assessment of how it compared with similar programmes.

Step 4: Plausibility Check of the Initial Programme Theory

This step entails a critical assessment of how the programme is meant to work and how it works in practice (Rossi et al., 2018). It involves checking links between different components, underlying assumptions and any external factors which influence how it works (Ibid). The adopted initial programme theory of the Career Guidance Programme was subjected to this critical assessment. The assessment involved a combination of an open inquiry process as well as

a comparison with existing social science theory and principles of career guidance interventions. The inquiry into the programme logic focussed on aspects of specification of different elements of the theory of change; plausibility of presumed change process (pathways), extent to which different components are well defined and sufficient, specification of external factors and underlying assumptions.

The plausibility check involved collecting data in three phases, namely: (1) a review of relevant literature on career guidance efficacy and programme theories as documented in similar interventions; (2) a study of career guidance theories, principles and standards informing Career Guidance Programmes, and (3) consulting different cohorts of stakeholders (beneficiaries and AVA programme staff) as primary data providers on how the programme works in practice. The sampling strategies, procedures, data collection tools and analysis are presented per data source below.

Sub-step 4.1: Review of relevant literature on Career Guidance Programme Efficacy and theories

The open inquiry review of literature aimed at identifying and documenting what other Career Guidance Programme theories looked like and their corresponding change mechanisms. This review was not restricted to one programme but instead accessed all available literature and synthesised it. The evaluator documented standard inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, underlying assumptions and external factors. Findings were synthesised and used to develop one career guidance programme theory emerging from the literature review.

The evaluator conducted the literature search using several library databases, including the Education Resources Information Centre, Journal Storage, and Google Scholar. The terms used in the search included: “evaluation of Career Guidance Programmes”; “systematic review of Career Guidance Programmes”; and “logic models or frameworks of Career Guidance Programmes”. Where necessary, searching conventions using OR and AND were used. The review commenced with identifying potentially relevant publications as per search results, accessing the abstract, reviewing it to determine its suitability and undertaking a detailed review of the article to determine its relevance. Only studies reporting results on use of career guidance in addressing unemployment were considered.

Data Collection.

The literature review guide presented in Appendix E guided the review of the literature.

Sub-step 4.2: Review of social science literature on principles and standards guiding career guidance interventions

The review of social science literature on career development theories, principles and standards guiding career guidance focused on unpacking what constitutes best practice for career guidance interventions.

An internet-based literature search using phrases such as career guidance standards and principles was carried out via online libraries and databases as specified under Sub-step 4.1. For an article to be considered, it had to focus on career guidance principles, the application of career guidance principles, factors affecting the effectiveness of career guidance, and theory/frameworks of career guidance.

The review of social science theory was guided by a set of questions presented in Appendix F.

Sub-step 4.3: Primary Stakeholders (Data Collection)

Two cohorts of stakeholders served as data providers to answer questions related to the actual programme theory of the Career Guidance Programme evaluation questions. This is not typical in a programme theory evaluation, however, it has been proposed by Taplin et al., (2013) in their technical paper on theory of change as part of checking whether short term or long-term outcomes are being achieved thus far. Without engaging in a full outcomes evaluation, but obtaining data that the outcomes are possible, it adds to the plausibility assessment of the ToC. The sampling strategies, procedures, data collection tools and analysis are presented per stakeholder group below.

Group A: Programme Participants.

Programme participants were the youth who had completed the Career Guidance Programme. These individuals were able to provide feedback on the benefits accrued in the short-term and what conditions they deemed necessary for these results to be achieved. Finally, programme participants provided input into what external factors they believed affected their success/non-success in the Career Guidance Programme.

Sampling.

The sample was drawn from three cohorts (2020, 2021 and 2022) as earlier cohorts could not be traced (inadequate records). Thus, the sampling frame of data providers comprised 46 participants. A non-probability, convenience sampling approach was used whereby invitations were sent out to all the 46 participants. This strategy was chosen to ensure that as many programme participants as possible formed part of the sample for the evaluation, and due to time constraints. No other criteria were included for the sample selection. In response to the invitation, a total of 11 programme participants indicated their willingness to participate in the research.

Data Collection.

Initially, focus group discussions (FDGs) were going to be the sole data collection method for the evaluation. However, only 11 participants responded favourably to the invitation to take part in the research, and not all of them were able or willing to in FDGs. They did however, indicate their preference to be interviewed. Thus, the evaluator adapted their original data collection strategy, FDGs were used for eight participants, and semi-structured interviews were utilised for three participants.

Two focus groups were conducted. One FGD was held in-person at the AVA office, while another was conducted virtually via Google Meet. The in person FGD had three participants (2 male and 1 female), whereas the online FGD had five participants (2 male and 3 female). All three semi-structured participant interviewees were conducted virtually.

The semi-structured interview questions and FDG questions are presented in Appendix G for further reference.

Procedure.

Before the commencement of the focus group discussions or individual interviews, participants were given information about the study and assurance of confidentiality. Consent was secured for participation, audio recording and use of direct quotations during the reporting of the evaluation findings. For direct quotations, participants were informed that no direct mention of names would be stated in the report. Participants are referred to as Participants in FDGs with targeted youth or individual interviews respondent numbers.

Group B: AVA implementers and staff, Host Agency and Donor.

Three implementing staff (direct and indirect) formed part of the other stakeholder group to be interviewed (1 AVA staff, 1 host agency and 1 donor agency). These individuals were questioned on the actual roll-out of the programme. They provided information on what was actually done during 2020, 2021 and 2012, how the programme worked, and possible areas for improvement. Again, this is not typical in a theory evaluation, however, Taplin et al., (2013) in their technical paper on theory of change recommends assessment of short- and long-term outcomes of a programme as a way of checking how an intervention works.

Sampling.

The three respondents (all female) held executive director positions in their respective institutions: AVA, donor, and host agency. Non-probability purposive sampling was chosen to select their individuals for the research. The AVA Director was specifically targeted because they participated in the theory evaluation workshop to extract the initial programme theory. The donor and host agency representative were selected because of their experiences with the programme and their ability to answer some of the evaluation questions.

Data Collection Tool.

Semi-structure interviews were used as the data collection method for the implementing staff stakeholder group. Refer to Appendix H for the informant interview schedule and consent letter for AVA implementers and staff.

Procedure.

A semi-structured interview appointment was set up through the AVA contact person. The interview started with self-introductions by both the interviewer and interviewee, followed by the evaluator stating the purpose of the interview, the expected length of the interview and securing confirmation for voluntary participation, consent and anticipated use of data from the interview. After the interviewer confirmed consent, the evaluator proceeded to interview as per the interview guide.

Step 5: Final Theory of Change

The final theory of change, or refined theory of change, was developed by adjusting the initial programme theory using the findings from Step 4.

Procedure

The synthesis involved comparisons between the initial programme theory and findings to show similarities or identify gaps (areas for improvement) in the initial programme theory. The gaps represent areas for improvement in the initial programme theory. Using this information, a final or refined programme theory was generated (Figure 4).

Data Collection Tool

The synthesis focused on identifying similarities, differences and peculiarities between different elements of the programme theory and its assumptions. The synthesis involved the comparison between initial programme theory, literature review and stakeholder feedback. The synthesis was guided by a set of questions presented in Appendix I.

Ethical Considerations

The students secured acceptance and approval from Action Volunteer Africa to undertake the evaluation of the Career Guidance Programme. Following this, ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the University of Cape Town, Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee.

Different measures were undertaken to ensure that the data collection and utilisation process adhered to acceptable research ethics. Specifically, every participant was given a study introduction and consent letter (Appendix J), which outlined the evaluation purpose, expected use of information, and benefits from the evaluation, as well as an invitation to participate in the evaluation voluntarily. Participants could choose to decline, participate or withdraw from the evaluation during the data collection process. Acceptance was given by signing the consent letter or verbal affirmation indicating informed consent and voluntary participation in the evaluation.

At the inception of data collection, all participants were requested for their permission and consent to the recording of proceedings over the Google meet and the potential use of direct quotes from the interview or discussion. Additionally, any direct quotes used in reporting

findings do not bear the personal details of respondents. Instead, respondent details are kept anonymous where direct quotes are used in the report.

The evaluation used secondary literature to construct and check the plausibility of the Career Guidance Programme theory. All secondary sources used are cited and referenced in line with the American Psychological Association (APA) seventh edition referencing convention. This gives credit to different authors for any text or information used by the evaluation. The research posed no risk or harm to the participants.

Data Analysis

The evaluation of the Career Guidance Programme generated data in different steps. Steps 1 to 3 entailed the construction of the initial programme theory. Step 4 drew data from document review and primary stakeholders. In contrast, Step 5 involved a synthesis of findings and a comparison of programme theories articulated by stakeholders (Step 3), document review (Step 4.1 and 4.2) and primary stakeholders (Step 4.3). Step 5 involved construction of final theory of change. In the context of the data collected in different steps and evaluation objectives, the following data analysis strategies and procedures were deployed.

The data collected in Steps 1, 2 and 3 was presented in terms of illustrations of the programme theory and narrative of the programme theory. To ensure that the illustrated programme theory was well developed, participants were probed to ensure specification of relations, links and loops between different nodes or components of the theory of action and change for the Career Guidance Programme (Marin & Wellman, 2011). Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) format of presenting the theory of change was used to present the programme theory.

In Step four, data was collected from documents and primary stakeholders. The analysis of data from the literature review involved synthesis and identification of studies and authors reporting a given career guidance outcome, assumptions, external factors and standards. Information from this process was presented as paraphrased statements or direct quotations.

The data from focus group discussions and key informant interviews was processed and analysed differently. The process entailed downloading the recordings from the Zoom server and transcribing interviews. A thematic analysis using a pencil and paper approach was then used to analyse the transcribed notes. All notes were read and coded in line with different themes and

sub-themes and re-organised together with data from the key informant discussions and focus group discussions. The results of the analysis include a summary of level of groundedness and references on a given theme and clustering of relevant data around given themes. Qualitative analysis results are presented starting with the theme, groundedness and references, its description, and illustration of findings in a paraphrased form and or direct quotes by data collection method.

Data Management Plan

A data management plan was developed specifying the nature of data collected and the expected level of analysis. The data management plan is presented in Appendix K.

Chapter 3: Results

Initial Programme Theory

The research extracted an initial programme theory in readiness for plausibility check of the Career Guidance Programme. The extraction of the initial programme theory sought to identify what designers of the career guidance programme expect to be done and they expected it to work. Accordingly, the initial programme theory is extracted and presented and explained below;

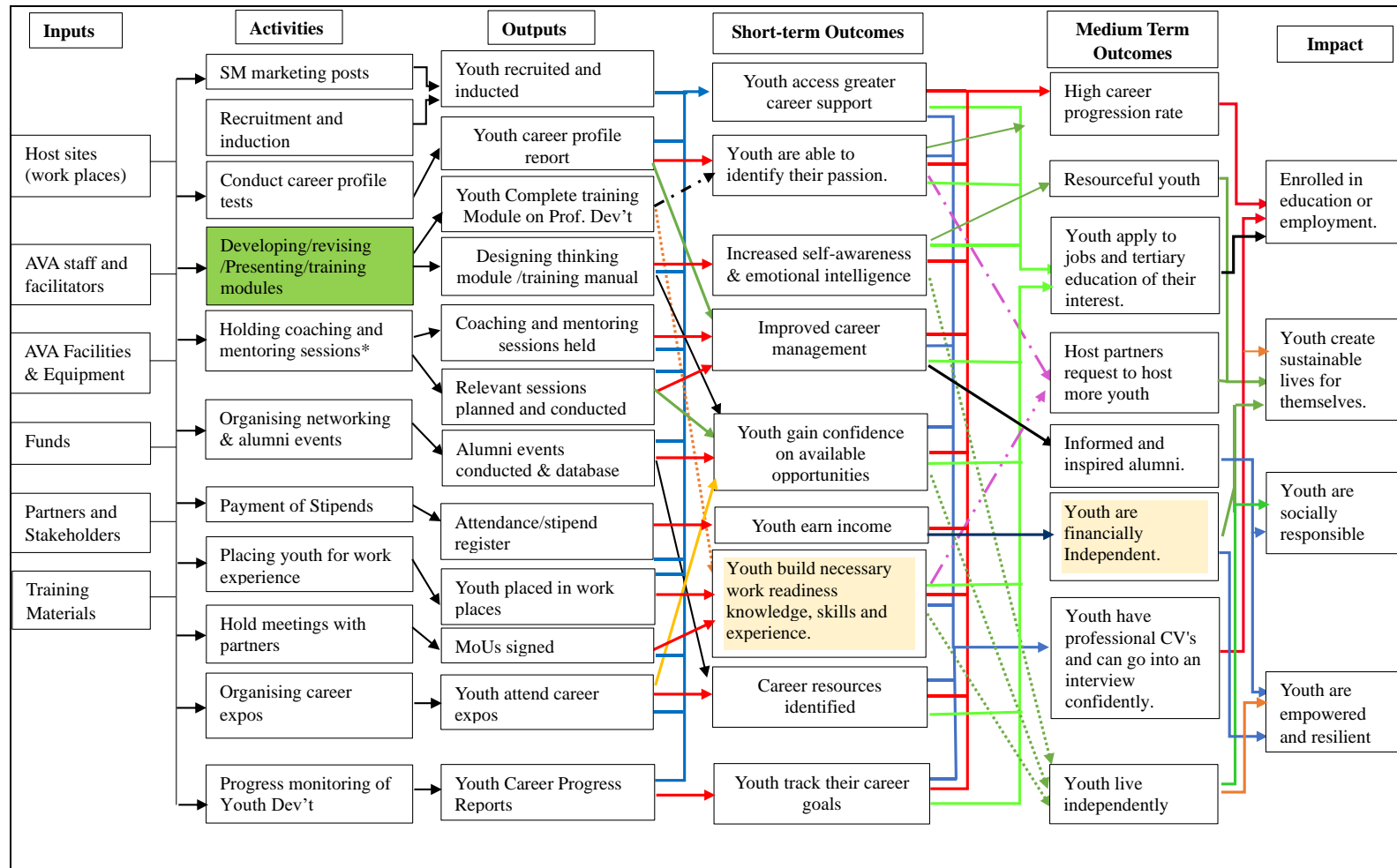
Extracted Career Guidance Programme Theory

The extracted and documented initial programme theory of AVA's Career Guidance Programme is presented in Figure 1. The initial programme theory is presented in the form of a theory of change (ToC) diagram.

The ToC entails the resources used to undertake the activities of the Career Guidance Programme. These activities contribute to the programme's short-term and medium-term outcomes. These outcomes are, in turn, anticipated to contribute to specific impacts (long-term outcomes). The arrows with different colours are used to make pathways clearer. Using one colour would make pathways not easily distinct. In addition, there could be links between different sets of outcomes. These have not been included because the diagram would become illegible due to congested links and loops.

Figure 1

Initial Programme Theory of AVA's Career Guidance Programme (derived from the AVA Staff Workshop and Refined by the Researcher)



Note: The green highlighted box shows the added text while the light gold highlights indicate the phrasing that was adjusted after Step Three (as detailed in the Method Chapter). The colour of the arrows do not carry any meaning. This is simply for a reader to identify which outcomes have relationships which each other. Not every box is a causal relationship to another. Using black arrows here would not have allowed a reader to see the connections.

As depicted in Figure 1, the anticipated Career Guidance Programme outcomes and impacts take place within certain assumptions and are influenced by different external factors.

Assumptions.

There were four assumptions in the initial programme theory. These assumptions refer to factors necessary for the programme to function well. These assumptions are:

(1) There is a mutual interest between AVA and Partners to support the continued implementation of the Career Guidance Programme - Mutual interest entailed both AVA, donor and host agencies having shared goals and expectations about the career guidance programme. The shared interest unites the different organisations. Shared interests enable them to pursue these interests through the career guidance programme.

(2) Funders are interested in AVA's work. Funders see the direct contribution of AVA's work to their organisation's aspirations - Like mutual interest, donors have to be interested in AVA's work, including career guidance. This interest is in form of shared organisational aspirations in solving youth unemployment. This interest enables donors to extend financial support to the programme for its implementation.

(3) Youth are interested in wanting to create a better future for themselves and appreciate the Career Guidance Programme as one opportunity to do so - Successful participation of targeted youth was linked to them seeing the programme as enabling them to solve the immediate and long-term challenges they faced.

(4) AVA Staff are skilled to support youth in different Career Guidance Programme activities during and after completion of the programme - Successful execution of the career guidance assumes that AVA staff and resources are skilled enough to deliver impactful career guidance programme.

External Factors.

The success of the Career guidance programme depends on external factors. These factors include:

(1) Families of youth permit them to explore their careers and choices - Consistent participation in the career guidance programme depended on role of families of targeted youth. These facilities

can use their power and influence to determine whether youth consistently participated and completed involved in the career guidance programme.

(2) Families of youth see value in having their children (young adults) working or pursuing post-matric education The role of the family was further seen from their ability to appreciate or see value in career guidance programme. The career guidance would succeed if families of targeted young adults saw value of the programme.

(3) Funders having funds for Career Guidance Programme type of interventions - Continued financing resourcing of career guidance programme was key determinant of its success. AVA's access to funds would successful execution of career guidance activities in line with the plan.

(4) Institutions have capacity to participate in career expo events - Career expos were a key strategy in ensuring career guidance programme achieves its objectives and links targeted youth to potential employers and mentors. Organisations participating in career expos needed resources and space to participate in career expos.

Description of the Causal Pathways of Initial Programme Theory.

The different pathways of how the programme is meant to work to create desired results are described showing the links between different components. It is important to note there could be links between different outcomes but also not every outcome is linked to each other outcome. The potential linkage between outcomes has been left out to enable pathways more legible. Below are the descriptions of the pathways as depicted in the Figure 1.

Pathways between the outputs and the short-term outcomes.

All specified outputs of the Career Guidance Programme lead to youth accessing career support from AVA and their host organisations. This career support is in the form of job shadowing, mentorship and coaching.

The youth career profile reports and completion of the professional development training leads to the short-term outcome of youth being able to identify their passion and career aspirations.

The design thinking training contributes to increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence of targeted youth.

The youth career profile report and the coaching and mentoring sessions contribute to improved career management for targeted youth.

The ToC shows that four outputs contribute to the short-term outcome of "youth gain confidence" in available opportunities. These outputs include the thinking training module, alum events, the database and the career expos.

Attendance registers facilitate the youth earning income. This is done through regular stipends paid to the targeted youth for the duration of their participation in the Life Matters Programme. Earning income enables youth to meet their basic needs and support their dependents (children and parents). It also enables them to participate in the programme without interruptions or pressure associated with the inability to meet their basic needs and support their families.

Youth who complete the professional development training are placed in employment. And sign MoUs with host organisations. This builds necessary work readiness knowledge, skills and experience.

Alum events that are conducted and the maintained database enable the youth to attend career expos, which contribute to career resources being identified.

Youth career progress reports contribute to youth tracking their career goals during participation in the programme.

Pathways between short-term and medium-term outcomes.

The ToC also reveals pathways between short-term and medium-term outcomes. All nine short-term outcomes contribute to two medium-term outcomes of higher career progression rate and youth applying to jobs and tertiary education based on their interests.

Six short-term outcomes contributed to youth having professional curriculum vitae and going into an interview confidently. These short-term outcomes include youth who can identify their passion, youth with improved career management, youth who gain confidence in available opportunities, youth who build necessary work readiness competencies, youth who have identified career resources and youth who track their career goals.

The medium-term outcome of "youth live independently" is linked to or caused by three short-term outcomes. These short-term outcomes include increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence, youth gaining confidence in available opportunities, and youth building necessary work readiness competences.

In the medium-term, "host partners request more youth". This outcome is linked to two short-term outcomes. These outcomes are that the youth can identify their passion and build necessary work readiness competencies. The youth who are committed to work and can work effectively at the host organisation learn to appreciate their contribution to the objectives of host organisations. This increases the likelihood of host organisations wanting to continue their partnership with AVA and employ volunteering youth.

Three short-term outcomes contribute to three medium outcomes. Increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence contribute to the youth being more resourceful. The short-term outcome of "improved career management" contributes to informed and inspired alumni. Year-earning income (short-term outcome) contributes to youth being financially independent.

Pathways between medium-term outcomes and impact.

The initial ToC specified four main impacts of the Career Guidance Programme. These impacts are linked to different medium-term outcomes. Three medium-term outcomes comprising high career progress rate, youth apply to jobs and tertiary education, and youth have professional curriculum vitae and can go into an interview confidently contribute to the long-term outcome of "[youth] enrolled in education or employment". The anticipated impact of "youth create sustainable lives for themselves" was linked to four medium-term outcomes (resourceful youth, host partners request to host more youth, youth have professional curriculum vitae and can go into an interview confidently, and youth live independently).

The ToC also shows that three medium-term outcomes contribute to the anticipated impact of "youth are socially responsible". These medium-term outcomes included informed and inspired alums, youth who are finally independent, and youth who live independently.

Having specified the initial programme theory, the researcher embarked on a literature review to identify and document the explicit programme theories of similar interventions. Literature review findings were used to compare AVA's Career Guidance Programme's ToC to

similar interventions, social science theories and standards. The literature review findings are presented in the next section.

Literature Review on Career Guidance Efficacy and Programme Theory

The literature review focused on establishing the existence of programme theories of interventions similar to AVA's Career Guidance Programme. It also sought to identify theories of career guidance and principles guiding career guidance interventions. Accordingly, the literature review findings are presented in the three areas. I start by looking at career guidance efficacy within which theories are embedded, followed by career guidance standards and end with findings of the literature review on career guidance theories.

Literature Review on Career Guidance Efficacy

The initial step during the literature review entailed establishing the existence of Career Guidance Programme theories locally (within South Africa) and internationally (Outside South Africa). After an extensive literature search, a limited number of documented and published theories of change of career guidance were identified. These theories of change were structured according to differing formats, namely, outcome matrices (Maguire & Killeen, 2003); [logic]models (Crossland, 2006; Guichard, 2003); conceptual models (Hooley & Dodd, 2015) and evaluation frameworks (Fein, 2012).

According to Maguire and Killeen (2003) an outcome matrix outlines outcomes at three levels, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and ultimate outcomes at both the individual level and system level. This presentation is similar to Fein's (2012) framework, which lists intermediate and primary outcomes but adds programme inputs as a key component of the model. Dodd and Hooley (2015) structure their theory of change in terms of general career guidance activities, primary economic outcomes, secondary economic outcomes and macro-economic benefits of outcomes (conceptual model display). Secondary economic outcomes and macroeconomic benefits of career guidance are akin to long-term outcomes or impacts of a career guidance programme, albeit from an economic point of view. Guichard's (2003) presentation was a form of logic model which presented the career guidance model in terms of career guidance activities and ultimate outcomes.

The literature search further focused on career guidance efficacy to identify what constitutes a career guidance intervention. The goal was to obtain a deeper understanding of how past career guidance interventions have worked to bring about change. A comparison of documented programme theories and career efficacy study results unearthed different components of what constitutes career guidance theories of change. The literature review documented the inputs, activities, outcomes, assumptions and external factors of career guidance interventions. Career outcomes were classified into three levels: immediate or short-term outcomes, intermediate (medium-term) outcomes and long-term (ultimate/distal) outcomes or impact (Perry et al., 2009; Fein 2012; Guichard, 2003; Maguire & Killeen, 2003). Literature review findings according to these components are presented next.

Career Guidance Inputs.

The literature review found a dearth of information on inputs or resources used by career guidance interventions. This area seems to be taken for granted or considered apparent. Career guidance interventions, however, use different resources (inputs) to undertake activities and produce outcomes. A few authors outline some of these resources, while others implicitly refer to such resources in the specification of assumptions or explanatory factors. These resources can be material or immaterial. Fein (2012) stated that material resources for a career guidance intervention in the United States of America included financial aid, computers, transportation and in-kind services such as employment connections and curriculum. Otwine (2022), also mentions funds in general, time and career information as crucial resources for career guidance interventions in Uganda.

Human resources or personnel are also considered vital resources in the provision of career guidance. Yuxiao and Abdullah (2023) identified competent staff and stakeholders as important determinants in the success of career guidance interventions in Guizhou. Career guidance interventions need competent technical and support personnel to plan, conduct, and follow up on career guidance interventions.

Career Guidance Intervention Activities.

Career guidance interventions carry out diverse activities (Hooley & Dodd, 2015). The diverse activities can be divided into guidance activities (Watts, 2013) and programme

intervention activities (Goodman and Hansen, 2005). Guidance activities include career information (provision of information on training opportunities, occupations and career paths), career counselling (closed interactions on specific career issues), career education (helping target groups to develop competences for their career development), career profiling (identify career potential) and employment counselling or helping to adjust to work and perform better (Ako et al., 2020; Watts, 2013; Goodman & Hansen, 2005; Guichard, 2003). The provision of career information is considered an essential activity in the delivery of any career guidance intervention to its target group (Otwine, 2022; Watts, 2013; Goodman & Hansen, 2005).

Programme intervention activities refer to a range of other activities for preparing individuals or groups for career guidance or making career guidance more effective. These activities include career visits to schools or communities and orientation to target groups (Chireshe, 2012); providing labour market information, tutoring, coaching and mentorship, work placements, individual assignments, group work, individual learning plans, training workshops, job simulations and shadowing and enterprise activities (Jemini Gashi et al., 2023; Hur et al., 2018; Watts, 2013; Chireshe, 2012; Guichard 2003). There is no distinction for different activities in different locations, these activities seem to be consistent in the Global North and South.

Career Guidance Outputs.

Outputs refer to products and services produced by an entity (Morra-Imas & Rist, 2009). Only one located source specified different outputs for its intervention. The career guidance efficacy researchers seem to pay less attention to the specification of career guidance intervention outputs. Crossland (2006), however, listed different outputs of a career service centre in Zululand. The outputs listed included education and training services (psychometric assessments, enrichment of teacher curriculum and life skills training), governance (recruited staff and governance structure) and mobile outreach services.

Immediate Outcomes of Career Guidance Interventions.

The literature review on career guidance efficiency revealed different immediate outcomes of career guidance interventions. The immediate outcomes of career guidance interventions were observed as benefits of career guidance services and products (Maguire &

Killeen, 2003). The following immediate outcomes were documented in different publications and journal articles regardless of location.

Career guidance interventions support the recipients (adolescents, youth and unemployed adults) in making decisions about career paths to enable them to secure future employment (Fein, 2012). This outcome was also reported by Biavaschi et al. (2012), who noted that effective career guidance enabled participants to make informed occupation- and employment-related decisions. Martaningsih (2018) and Ajufo (2013) affirmed that career guidance enabled participants to make suitable and thoughtful decisions. Through career guidance, young people select careers in line with their aspirations (Ajufo, 2013). Earlier work by Crossland (2006) also reported that career guidance enabled people to participate actively in career decision-making processes. The ability to take career decisions was linked to career decision-making skills, which were provided through different career guidance activities (Jemini Gashi, 2023).

High wage expectations are one of the causes of unemployment (Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Mayston, 2002). Career guidance, however, provides recipients with information about occupations and the labour market. This, in turn, enables them to appreciate the realities of work and develop more realistic expectations about existing career openings (Jemini Gashi et al., 2023; Guichard, 2003; Mayston, 2002; Donohue & Patton, 1998).

Career guidance interventions contribute to improving individuals' career planning. Career guidance interventions provide information and help clarify expectations, which in turn enables participants to set career goals (Jemini Gashi et al., 2023). Interactions with career counsellors and fellow participants inspire target groups to develop and prioritise their career goals (Donohue & Patton, 1998). Donohue and Patton (1998) observed that career guidance contributed to improving the direction of career goals. Fein (2012) also found that participation in career guidance interventions enabled more careful planning and prioritising actions aimed at achieving such career goals.

Unemployment is reported to have adverse psychological effects on the unemployed, which causes doubts in their confidence (Robertson, 2013). Career guidance interventions such as counselling, coaching and mentorship are credited with improving the confidence of unemployed persons (Gupta & Kothe, 2023; Ajufo, 2013; Donohue & Patton, 1998). Studies showed that career guidance activities restored and built confidence in unemployed persons as

they started to believe in their abilities (Hooley & Dodd, 2015).

Career Guidance interventions are also credited with enabling participants to acquire work readiness skills (Gupta & Kothe, 2023; Martaningsih & Istiyono, 2019; Fein, 2012; Perry et al., 2009). Career guidance participants are motivated to continue with education training or enrol on training programmes which enable them to acquire work-based technical competences required to perform in different occupations (Dodd et al., 2022; Martaningsih, 2018). This observation corroborates El Naggar et al.'s (2022) assertion that career guidance interventions improve the extent of vocational development and career readiness, which, in turn, enables participants to cope with different tasks involved in the development of occupational skills.

Job searching was identified as one of the immediate results of career guidance interventions. Career guidance equips participants with job search skills such as preparation of application letters and curriculum vitae (Hooley & Dodd, 2015). The increased confidence of participants makes them set goals and also commence active job searching (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). For new graduates, career guidance is also credited with a reduction in the length of job searching. Career guidance has also been found to contribute to enabling job seekers to develop a job strategy and increase the intensity of job searching (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). The literature review revealed that participation in career guidance intervention triggered job searching as one of the immediate actions taken after receiving a career guidance intervention.

Career guidance also contributes to increasing awareness of existing opportunities for employment and training (Biavaschi et al., 2012; Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Guichard, 2003). As part of career guidance, labour market information is shared with career guidance participants. Career guidance providers who do job placements also share such information on available opportunities with career guidance recipients (Watts, 2013; Guichard, 2003). Such information enables participants to consider available job opportunities as well as the need for further skills enhancements as part of career readiness.

Participation in career guidance activities was linked to improved self-awareness (Martaningsih & Istiyono, 2018; Crossland, 2006; Donohue & Patton, 1998). Self-reflection activities of career guidance enable individuals to identify their strengths, areas for improvement, motivations and fears (Jemini Gashi, 2023). These contribute to enabling career guidance participants to understand their world and embark on career development journey.

Career guidance interventions have also been linked to the development of self-efficacy (Jemini Gashi et al., 2023; Robertson, 2013;). Participation in career guidance intervention enables its participants to believe in their competencies and ability to secure employment. Fein (2012) affirms that participation in career guidance enables the ability to nurture and sustain positive beliefs and feelings about oneself and others within one's environment. This assertion is also reflected by Hooley and Dodd (2015), where the development of self-efficacy is considered a fundamental skill of career management as a result of participation in career guidance interventions.

The literature review also revealed other, diverse immediate outcomes of career guidance. These other immediate outcomes included developing positive attitudes towards career guidance and counselling (Martaningsi & Istiyono, 2019); developing optimism (Robertson, 2013); access to career resources (Fein, 2012); access to career information and labour market information (Crossland, 2006); confirmation of own abilities (Donohue & Patton, 1998) and participants holding discussing career options with parents (Crowley, 1981).

Intermediate Outcome of Career Guidance Interventions.

The literature review revealed different intermediate or medium-term outcomes of career guidance interventions. The extent of reporting on each outcome varies, and again there is no consistent pattern of outcomes whether a local or international intervention, these are instead presented collectively instead of per region.

Career guidance interventions enable individuals to adapt to different employment requirements and demands (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). The adaptability to roles involves learning new skills and coping with different work demands. Hooley and Rice (2019) affirmed that career guidance enables individuals to learn skills which are relevant to the needs of different occupations in collaboration with the world of work. As individuals learn new skills, they are able to cope with tasks encountered in their occupations (El Naggar et al., 2021). Coping with work also involves adjusting to new roles that may arise in the course of a career. This coping involves undertaking learning opportunities which enable individuals to match skills with [new] work demands (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). Robertson (2013, p.257) looked at this adaptability in terms of "redefining vocational identity", while Fein (2013) refers to it as the attainment of credentials which lead to employment. The career guidance efficacy studies,

therefore, lend credence to the assertion that it enables individuals to develop careers and adapt to different career demands.

Career guidance is also linked to developing attitudes and behaviours that contribute to working effectively and efficiently (Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Watts, 2013). Career guidance prepares individuals to navigate the world of work successfully. Through career guidance norms, expected behaviours are nurtured, which enable individuals to develop attitudes and behaviours (timekeeping, courtesy, and respecting others) that are needed in the performance of tasks (Fein, 2013).

Similar to adaptability to the role, career guidance interventions enable its clients to increase occupation knowledge or work-based competences such as applied knowledge, technical skills and information uses (Gupta et al., 2023; Martaningsi & Istiyono, 2019). Other researchers also alluded to this observation. El Naggar et al. (2021) noted that career guidance interventions improved the degree of vocational development. Hooley and Dodd (2015) referred to this increase in vocational knowledge as human capital, which entailed skills and qualifications in both formal and informal settings to meet labour market requirements. Participation in career guidance resulted in the acquisition of academic and work readiness certifications (Fein, 2012). Findings by the above researchers confirm earlier findings of Crowley (1981) and Pavlak (1983), which affirmed that an increase in occupational knowledge was considered a key intermediate outcome of career guidance interventions.

Career guidance interventions are credited with inspiring, motivating and changing the attitudes of their participants (Watts, 2013). Career and employment counselling generates interest and enables participants to initiate action towards different career goals. Career guidance motivated participants to work or enrol and complete training (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). Fein (2013) considers the ability to self-motivate as one of the basic psychosocial qualities that permeate into career guidance participants. Hooley and Dodd (2015) further observed that career guidance participants undertook self-motivated learning to cope with different career demands such as job searching, learning new working skills and completing vocation training. Career guidance interventions are linked to career maturity or maturation. Career maturation is viewed as an individual's readiness to make informed, appropriate career decisions and deal with corresponding development tasks (Savickas, 1984). Participation in career guidance

interventions facilitated this decision-making, which contributed to the realisation of career goals (Perry et al., 2009; Crites, 1987; Pavlak, 1983). Maguire and Killeen (2002) and Martaningsih (2018) corroborated these earlier studies where achieving career maturity was considered a key outcome of career guidance interventions.

Improved behavioural skills are also a common intermediate outcome of career guidance interventions. Career guidance contributed to shaping behaviour and attitudes linked to roles individuals occupy (Biavaschi et al., 2012; Guichard, 2003; Maguire & Killeen, 2003). Career guidance led to the development of skills such as communication, personal presentation, time management and interpersonal skills (Gupta & Kothe, 2023). Improved behavioural skills are credited with enabling its participants to be more committed to their careers, develop the ability to navigate tasks and be effective in occupations (Hur et al., 2018; Fein, 2012).

Participation in career guidance interventions involving groups of individuals contributed to developing social capital by intervention participants. Individuals participating in group and institutional-based career guidance secured additional benefits through membership in social networks (Hooley & Dodd, 2015). Participants in group-based career guidance form and belong to social groups, which enables them to forge comradeship and avoid being isolated by unemployment challenges (Robertson, 2013). Similarly, Fein (2012) also asserted that career guidance enabled its participants to engage in social support networks as they went about schooling and job searches. Such networks enabled individuals to cross-fertilise ideas and secure mutual support in order to secure work (Hooley & Dodd, 2015).

Career guidance was linked to strengthened self-esteem among targeted persons (Robertson, 2013). Participants of career guidance also benefited from reduced social exclusion or inequality, primarily when interventions were implemented among marginalised groups (Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Guichard, 2003). Lastly, Maguire and Killeen (2003) and Hooley and Dodd (2015) reported transition skills from education or unemployment to employment or better roles as a critical intermediate outcome of career guidance.

Impact of Career Guidance Interventions.

The literature revealed different long-term outcomes, the results of the outcomes are presented uniformly, and were found in local and international interventions.

Career guidance interventions contribute to reducing unemployment or increasing employment in the economy (Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Fein, 2012). Career guidance was found to contribute to reducing unemployment by supporting participants to form realistic expectations (Mayston, 2002), reducing skills shortages through ensuring that demanded skills are acquired (Maguire & Killeen, 2003) and securing jobs or labour market participation (Robertson, 2013). These aspects enabled career guidance participants to secure jobs and contributed to lowering unemployment levels in different countries and communities. Mayston (2002) reported that due to the formation of realistic expectations in terms of wages and work, wage-related unemployment was reduced as people were able to seek employment based on existing market offers. Ako et al. (2020), Ajufo (2013), and Perry et al. (2009) agree. They all observed that employment counselling contributed to tackling unemployment among unemployed youths.

Effective career guidance is credited with improving the functioning of labour markets (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). Career guidance contributes to addressing market failures which occur when there is an imbalance between available job vacancies (labour demand) and the available pool of unemployed labour or labour supply (Ajufo, 2013; Guichard, 2003; Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Mayston, 2002). Effective career guidance strengthens job uptake and ensures that demanded skills are in supply. Through the provision of labour market information, career guidance also contributes to improving labour mobility (Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Ajufo, 2013). Watts (2013) further noted that career guidance solved skills mismatches, improved labour market signalling (demand for specific skills) and ensured the proper deployment of competences. These studies show that career guidance ensures that the labour supply and market work well.

Reduction in unemployment benefits is also an outcome attributed to career guidance (Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Mayston, 2002). In countries where unemployment benefits are provided to unemployed persons, entry or re-entry into employment weans beneficiaries off this social protection support. Accordingly, governments and agencies offering unemployment benefits stop such payments and save resources for other activities.

Increased job tenure and access to long-term incomes was identified as a long-term outcome of career guidance interventions. This outcome was first identified by Pavlak (1983) in the form of increased job security. Other studies on the efficacy of career guidance have

validated this. Maguire and Killeen (2003) noted that individuals who underwent career guidance experienced extended tenure in their jobs. Even firms which hired such people had better job retention. The increased job security implies longer stay in employment and contributes to providing sustainable incomes to career guidance participants (Robertson, 2013; Fein, 2012; Perry et al., 2009).

Improved well-being or quality of life was identified as one of the vital long-term outcomes of career guidance (Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Robertson, 2013; Ajufo, 2013; Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Mayston, 2002). Well-being is in terms of keeping individuals physically and mentally healthy and happy due to their participation in work and fulfilment of their career objectives. Career guidance, which leads to employment, contributes to improvement in incomes, benefits, and job opportunities, which contributes to positively improving the psychological well-being of its participants (Fein, 2012). This well-being can also be extended to other family members as it improves the quality of parenting and resources available to family members.

Career guidance interventions were also linked to individuals becoming self-reliant as they secure their employment and adapt to different situations (Ajufo, 2013; Fein, 2012). When done among vulnerable groups such as youth living in unplanned settlements, career guidance was noted to contribute to a reduction in frequency and crime rate (Hooley & Todd, 2015; Mayston, 2002). It also contributed to greater attachment to societal values as individuals pursue careers espoused by their families and communities (Robertson, 2013; Maguire and Killeen, 2003).

Although not widely mentioned, career guidance interventions have led to self-employment and entrepreneurship (Watts, 2013). Aside from taking up formal employment, enterprise development is considered a pathway for career guidance. As such, some career guidance recipients begin self-employment by starting their enterprises as opposed to formal or salaried employment.

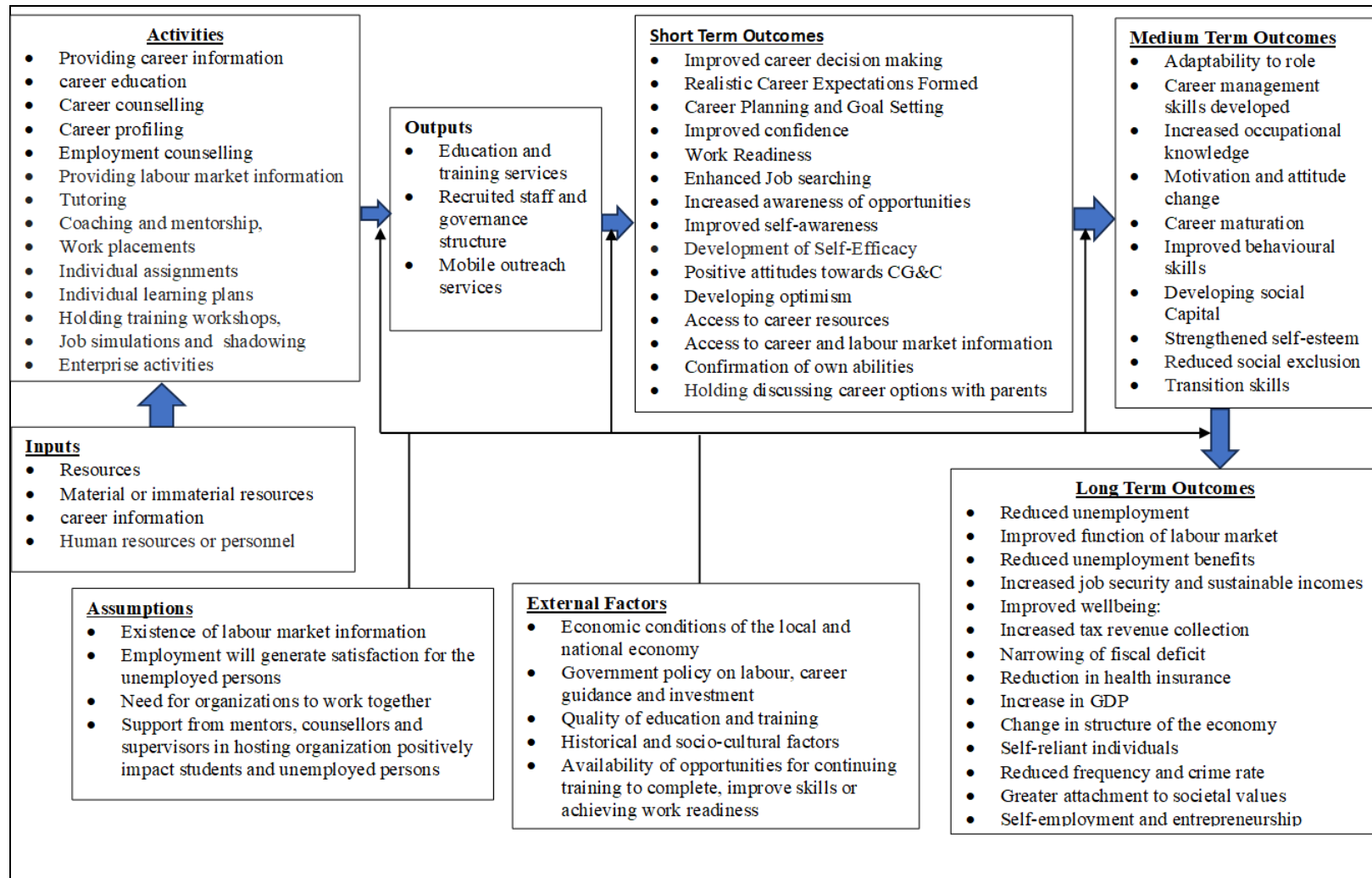
The literature review also uncovered other distal outcomes of career guidance interventions. Some of these outcomes included increased tax revenue collection due to pay-roll tax imposed on newly employed persons (Hooley & Todd, 2015; Mayston, 2002). This leads to the narrowing of the fiscal deficit as more tax revenue is collected to fund public expenditure

(Hooley & Todd, 2015). The career guidance outcome of reducing employment contributed to a reduction in health insurance costs on public funds as formerly unemployed persons directly meet their health insurance costs (Mayston, 2002). With more people employed, there is increased productivity in the economy (Hooley & Todd, 2015; Maguire & Killeen, 2003). This contributes to an increase in the amount of goods and services produced in the economy (Maguire and Killeen, 2003; Mayston, 2002), which contributes to changes in the organisation of production systems and units in the economy (Maguire & Killeen, 2003).

Results from the literature review on career guidance efficacy and programme theories are summarised in one theory of change diagram (Figure 2). These results will be compared to the initial programme theory and action theory emerging from the primary data collection analysis results in Chapter 4.

Figure 2

Career Guidance Theory Emerging from Literature Review (Developed by the Researcher based on the Literature Review Results)



Career Guidance Assumptions.

Career guidance interventions work when certain conditions hold. Simon (2011) refers to assumptions as "...things that are somewhat out of your control, but if they disappear, your study will become irrelevant" (p.1). Career guidance efficacy studies and theories had limited information on assumptions that have to hold for career guidance interventions to be effective. From the literature review, the following assumptions were explicitly stated:

The existence of labour market information during career guidance was considered a fundamental assumption in effective career guidance (Otwine et al., 2022; Biavaschi et al., 2012). The existence of labour market information enables career guidance providers to create awareness of available employment opportunities within the local setting. Recipients of career guidance, on the other hand, make informed decisions on skills enhancement opportunities and skills demanded by employers.

Career guidance interventions work on the assumption that employment will generate satisfaction for unemployed persons (Robertson, 2013). The demand for career guidance interventions is premised on the assumption that unemployed persons anticipate enjoying benefits and satisfaction from different occupations they seek to secure.

Crossland (2006) observed that for career guidance intervention to be successful, organisations need to work together. Career guidance involves different entities such as career guidance providers, training providers, funders and policymakers. All these actors are assumed to work together or effectively to enable career guidance to produce intended outcomes.

For career guidance to be successful, there is an assumption that the support from mentors, counsellors and supervisors in hosting organisations influences students and unemployed persons (Otwin et al., 2022). Such support provides an enabling environment where career guidance recipients learn effectively and are mentored to acquire work readiness skills.

External Factors Influencing Career Guidance Efficacy.

External factors refer to things or variables which are outside the control of the organisation (Foong, 2007). These external factors can influence the efficacy of interventions.

Different external factors influence the efficacy of career guidance and, by implication, its programme theory. These factors are listed below:

Economic conditions of the local and national economy influence career guidance. The extent to which the local economy generates demand for goods and services, its structure and population structure influence the number of jobs created and the corresponding skills required (Fein, 2012; Ültanır, 2012). Biavaschi et al. (2012) observed that the interaction between changes in population structure and economic growth influenced the demand and supply of young workers. Similarly, the change in the structure of the economy towards technology-focused industries created the need for technologically skilled workers (Crossland, 2006).

Government policy on labour, career guidance and investment influences the effectiveness of career guidance. Government support in the form of incentives to employers, minimum wage, social protection and training opportunities influences the hiring of employees (Yuxiao & Abdullah, 2023; Otwine et al., 2022; Crossland, 2006). Such policies determine the nature of the transition between skilling and employment (Biavaschi et al., 2012).

The quality of education and training also influences career guidance efficacy. The quality of education and training determines the rate and precision of matching between graduates and employers (Biavaschi et al., 2012; Ültanır, 2012). Where the education sector produces skilled persons, it is easier for them to be absorbed into employment.

Ültanır (2012) identified historical and sociocultural factors as critical external factors affecting the performance of career guidance. These factors included family structure and changing values (Ültanır, 2012). Watts (2013) reports that family influences and patronage determined whether career guidance registered positive outcomes. Due to family influence, it is recommended that identifying and managing the differing interests and expectations (demands) of different stakeholders (students, educators and families) is vital for the intervention to achieve its objectives (Yuxiao & Abdullah, 2023).

The availability of opportunities for continuing training to complete, improve skills or achieve work readiness is a contextual factor that can also affect career guidance (Fein, 2012).

Plausibility Check of Initial Programme Theory and Literature Review Findings

Having undertaken the literature review and taken note of different findings, a comparison was made between each aspect or element of the initial programme theory specified by AVA and findings from the literature review. This comparison shows whether the different specific aspects of the programme theory are contained in similar programmes as per the literature review. Overall, most of the elements appear in other similar programmes or studies on career guidance efficacy as presented in the Table 1.

Table 1*Career Guidance Programme Theory Plausibility Confirmation Check (Source: Researcher)*

Component	Initial Programme Theory Aspect	Confirmed	Literature Review	
Inputs	Host sites (workplaces)	Yes	Goodman & Hansen (2005)	
	AVA Staff and facilitators	Yes	Yuxiao and Abdullah (2023)	
	AVA facilities and equipment	Yes	Fein (2012)	
	Funds	Yes	Otwine (2022), Fein (2012)	
	Partners and stakeholders	Yes	Yuxiao & Abdullah (2023), Fein (2012)	
	Training materials	Yes	Fein (2012)	
	Activities	Social marketing posts	No	-
Recruitment and induction		No	-	
Conduct career profile test		Yes	Ako et al. (2020), Hooley & Dodd (2015), Watts (2013), Watts (2013), Goodman & Hansen (2005), Guichard (2003)	
Developing/revising/ presenting/training modules			-	
Holding coaching and mentoring sessions		Yes	Watts (2013), Hooley & Dodd (2015)	
Organising networking and alumni events		Yes	Jemini Gashi (2023)	
Paying stipends		No		
Placing youth for work experience		Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Watts (2013), Goodman & Hansen (2005), Chireshe (2012),	
Holding meetings with partners		No		
Organising career expos		Yes	Goodman & Hansen (2005)	
Progress monitoring of youth development		No	-	
Output		Youth recruited and inducted	Yes	Crossland (2006)
		Youth career profile report	Yes	Crossland (2006)
	Youth complete training on professional development	Yes	Crossland (2006)	
	Design thinking module/training manual	Yes	Crossland (2006)	
	Coaching and mentorship sessions held	Yes	Watts (2013), Hooley & Dodd (2015)	
	Relevant sessions planned and held	No	-	
	Alumni events conducted and database	Yes	Robertson (2013), Hooley & Dodd (2015)	
	Attendance/stipend register			
	Youth placed in workplaces	Yes	Goodman & Hansen (2005)	
	MoUs signed	No	-	
	Youth attend career expos	No	-	
Youth career progress reports	No	-		

Table 2 Continued*Career Guidance Programme Theory Plausibility Confirmation Check (Source: Researcher)*

Short term Outcomes	Youth access greater career support	Yes	Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Watts, 2013); Goodman & Hansen (2005)
	Youth are able to identify their passion	Yes	Jemini Gashi (2023), Hooley & Dodd (2015), Donohue& Patton (1998)
	Increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Guichard (2003), Mayston (2002), Donohue& Patton (1998),
	Improved career management	Yes	Jemini Gashi (2023), Martaningsi & Istiyono (2019), Donohue& Patton (1998), Crossland (2006),
	Youth gain confidence on available opportunities	Yes	Gupta & Kothe (2023), Hooley & Dodd (2015), Robertson (2013), Ajufo (2013), Donohue& Patton (1998),
	Youth earn income	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Robertson (2013), Ajufo (2013), Fein (2012), Perry (2009)
	Youth build necessary work readiness knowledge, skills and experience	Yes	Gupta & Kothe (2023), Dodd, & Hooley (2022). Dodd et al. (2022), El Naggat et. (2021), Martaningsih & Istiyono (2019), Hur et al. (2018), Martaningsih (2018), Fein (2012), Perry et al., 2009
	Career resources identified	Yes	Martaningsi & Istiyono (2019); Keumala & Budiamin (2018), Keumala et al. (2018), Maguire & Killeen (2003), Donohue& Patton (1998)
	Youth track their career goals	Yes	Jemini Gashi (2023), Hooley & Dodd (2015), Donohue& Patton (1998),
Medium Term Outcome	High career progression rate	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015); Ajufo (2013), Robertson (2013), Watts, 2013, Perry et al., 2009, Maguire & Killeen (2003),
	Resourceful youth	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Robertson (2013)
	Youth apply to jobs and tertiary education of their interest	Yes	Gupta et al. (2023), Martaningsi & Istiyono (2019), Hooley & Dodd (2015), Watts (2013), Fein (2012), Perry et al. (2009).
	Host partners request to host more youth	No	-
	Informed and inspired alumni	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Robertson (2013), Fein (2012)
	Youth financially independent	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Robertson (2013), Ajufo (2013), Fein (2012), Perry (2009)
	Youth have professional CVs and can go into interview confidently	Yes	Gupta & Kothe (2023), Maguire & Killeen (2003), Biavaschi et al. (2012), Fein (2012), Robertson, 2013
Youth live independently	Yes	Ajufo (2013)	

Table 3 Continued*Career Guidance Programme Theory Plausibility Confirmation Check (Source: Researcher)*

Impact	Enrolled in education and employment	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Watts (2013), Biavaschi et al. (2012), Maguire & Killeen (2003), Mayston (2002)
	Youth create sustainable lives for themselves	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Ajufo (2013), Robertson (2013), Fein (2012), Perry (2009)
	Youth are socially responsible	Yes	Hooley & Dodd (2015), Robertson (2013), Fein (2012)
	Youth are empowered and resilient	Yes	Ajufo (2013), Robertson (2013), Fein (2012).
Assumption	There is a mutual interest between AVA and Partners to support the continued implementation of the Career Guidance Programme.	Yes	Crossland (2006)
	Funders are interested in AVA's work. Funders see the direct contribution of AVA's work to their organisation's aspirations.	No	-
	Youth are interested in wanting to create a better future for themselves and appreciate the Career Guidance Programme as one opportunity to do so.	No	-
	AVA Staff are skilled to support youth in different Career Guidance Programme activities during and after completion of the programme.	No	-
External Factors	Families of youth permit them to explore their careers and choices.	Yes	Yuxiao & Abdullah, 2023), Watts (2013), Ültanır (2012).
	Families of youth see value in having their children (young adults) working or pursuing post-matric education.	Yes	
	Funders having funds for Career Guidance Programme type of interventions.	No	-
	Institutions have capacity to participate in career expo events.	No	-

Note: This table lists different elements of the initial programme theory of AVA's career guidance and matches them to findings from the literature review. It indicates whether a given element/aspect of the theory is confirmed in the literature or not.

Career Guidance Standards

A standard refers to a level of quality that represents best practice (Hooley & Rice, 2019). Accordingly, the study sought to identify any defined standards in the provision of career guidance which would be used to evaluate AVA's Career Guidance Programme practices. The research of standards in career guidance interventions is under-researched. Through the literature review, however, three authors were identified (Hooley & Rice, 2019; Simon, 2014; Watts, 2013). Observations and recommendations from these authors are presented below:

Hooley and Rice (2019) identified six domains of career guidance provision within which standards are situated and to be adhered to in the provision of career guidance. These domains include policy, organisation, process, people, output or outcome and consumption. The key aspects for each of these areas include: the existence of career guidance policy (policy); the extent to which organisations are set up, resourced and managed (organisation); the extent to which accurate information is provided and ethics adhered to (process); the existence of professional standards guiding practitioners of career guidance (people); career guidance efficacy (outputs and outcomes) and the extent to which there is customer satisfaction with the intervention or consumption (Hooley & Rice, 2019). Each of these domains has corresponding questions that can be used to check the quality level of any career guidance interventions.

Simon (2014) provides some clues on areas which would constitute quality assurance in university career guidance services. While referring to the European Commission, four components of what would constitute high-quality career guidance were stated. These included using appropriate guidance methods which are grounded in theory and empirical work; continuous improvement through regular feedback and reflection; client feedback mechanism, and the existence of competent staff (Simon, 2014). Simon further recommends that a good career guidance intervention should undertake a cost-benefit analysis to determine its worth and regularly conduct indicator-based client satisfaction surveys. It is also highlighted that organisations offering Career Guidance Programmes can seek accreditations and certification from external bodies. Potential certification agencies include the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), and Total Quality Management (TQM)]. The development of standards for career guidance, which are

legally binding, is also cited as one way of enforcing standards in the provision of career guidance interventions.

Unlike Hooley and Rice (2019) and Simon (2014), who explicitly referred to career guidance standards, Watts (2013) refers to principles to adhere to in the provision of career guidance for technical and vocational education and training. Watts (2013) stated fundamental principles that career guidance provisions should espouse. The principles are identified for pre-entry and in-programme situations. A review of these principles reveals that prior to enrolment in any career education, participants should be availed of information provision on all existing career education opportunities options and access to counselling supported with high-quality career information to inform choices after careful consideration (Watts, 2009). Watts (2013) also recommends following certain principles while participants are attending any programme. It is recommended that career guidance is available at all relevant decision points and exits for any occupation programme to supports students in their future career decisions and application of learning in real-life situations (Watts, 2013).

From the available literature reviewed, all three authors identify the provision of appropriate information grounded in theory and evidence as a key area of high-quality career guidance. Hooley, Rice (2019) and Simon (2014) allude to the need to conduct regular client satisfaction and feedback studies and the use of competent (professional) personnel as a measure of high-quality career guidance. Unlike the other two researchers who focus on the entire process of career guidance, including entities and persons involved, Watts (2013) defined principles that make career guidance more relevant and productive to target groups. All three authors recommended self-monitoring and assessment of adherence to different standards and principles. However, Simon (2014) also suggested an externally led process (securing certification and accreditations) for checking whether standards are adhered to in the implementation of career guidance interventions.

Overview of Career Guidance Theories

Career guidance is concerned with services or support offered to individuals to enable them to make education and occupational choices and to manage their careers (OECD, 2004). Different career guidance frameworks guide these services. These frameworks are referred to as career development theories (Adreev, 2023) or career decision-making theories (Gikopoulou,

2008). Career guidance theories "show the various paths towards improving professional growth and the career trajectory followed by individuals for overall job satisfaction and goal achievement" (Nayak, 2020, p23515). Services underpinned by career guidance theory support clients to make career decisions in an informed and structured manner (National Guidance Research Forum, 2024).

Diverse career guidance theories have been documented in literature. These theories have had a varying influence on shaping the practice of career guidance today. The review is limited to theories which are considered to have been most influential in informing career guidance practice (Leung, 2008; Roy, 2021). A total of six career development theories were reviewed. Their application in the delivery of AVA's Career Guidance Programme will be discussed in the discussion chapter. Reviewed theories are presented below:

Social Cognitive Theory.

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) of career development was developed by Albert Bandura (1977). SCT is also referred to as self-efficacy theory in career counselling (Betz, 2004). SCT relies on the personal aspects of an individual to build their career path. The theory also gives prominence to the person's past experiences. According to Bandura (1977), what motivates an individual is embedded within experiences. Once such experiences are explored and identified, it becomes possible to make a career choice and pursue it. SCT revolves around the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief concerning their ability to perform a given task or behaviour successfully. Individuals hold self-expectations in terms of what they believe they can do, and these are defined in terms of behaviours. The number of expectations depends on the number of behaviours that can be defined. Each of the behaviour domains is important in the choice of career or success in a given career. Self-expectations have three behaviour outcomes, namely: (a) approach (what a person tries) verses avoidance (things a person dodges); (b) quality of performance of behaviour in the target domain; and (c) persistence in the face of obstacles. Self-efficacy produces effects. These effects entail either accomplishing or failing to accomplish a behaviour (task) and being persistent or giving up (Bandura, 1997).

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficiency is attributed to either background or experiential information causes. The causes include: (a) performance accomplishments (experience of successfully performing behaviour in questions)-mastery experiences; (b)

vicarious learning modelling (learning from experience of others); (c) lower levels of emotional arousal (less anxiety in connection with behaviour)-physiological and affective states, and (d) social persuasion (encouragement and support from others)-verbal persuasion. These sources originate from family origin, background variables (gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and nature and quality of educational opportunities (Bandura, 1997). SCT encourages career guidance practitioners to develop self-efficacy from which careers are identified and developed.

Learning Theory of Career Choice and Counselling.

The learning theory of career choice and counselling originates from the social theory of learning propounded by Klumboltz (1976). The theory has been further refined into the social learning theory of career decision-making and more recently developed into the learning theory of career counselling (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). The theory postulates that a person's development and experiences throughout their life affect which career they are best suited for. In other words, people make career choices based on diverse experiences, beliefs, and the nature of the world, which emerge through direct or indirect occupation education. The social learning theory of career decision-making focuses on teaching career guidance decision-making alternatives. The theory prescribes the role of career guidance practitioners as supporting clients to identify and correct any wrong beliefs in career decision-making.

The learning theory of career choice and counselling focuses on tools for career counsellors to help clients define and follow their career paths (Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996). The theory specifies four issues to be considered when supporting clients with career decision-making. These issues include

1. People need to expand their capabilities and interests (practitioner should help clients explore new activities)
2. People need to expand their capabilities and interests (practitioners help them to cope with the stress of changing labour market demands/skills)
3. People need to be empowered to take action (providing support)
4. Career practitioners need to play an extended role (career and personal counselling to address challenges) – through mentorship and coaching.

In assisting career guidance clients, practitioners should use different strategies (career education, use of job clubs, occupational information resources) that enable clients to develop or prevent certain behaviours (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). Targeted and remedial strategies aimed at boosting the confidence of clients are also recommended.

Traits and Factor Theory.

Frank Parsons is credited as the founder of the traits and factor theory in 1908 (Adreev, 2023; Gikopoulou, 2008). The traits and factor theory is rooted in the discipline of psychology and focuses on individual traits or attributes as critical influencers of career choices. Factors refer to possible jobs and occupations, while traits refer to qualities or attributes of the persons seeking careers. Under the trait and factor theory, there is an assumption that career guidance is about rational or objective decision-making. This decision-making involves an expert practitioner or career guidance counsellor assessing the client and then matching the person to the most suitable career. Occupational choices or decision-making can then take place when persons have accurate information about their traits, know the labour market (existing opportunities or skills in demand), make judgements between the two aspects, and choose a career.

The trait and factor theory is based on the assumption that individual talents and attributes required for a particular career or job can be measured precisely to achieve a good fit or match (Adreev, 2023; Gikopoulou, 2008). It also postulates that when this measurement and matching is done correctly, individuals excel in their roles and are more productive (Adreev, 2023; Gikopoulou, 2008).

Occupational Orientation Theory.

Holland proposed the theory of occupational orientation as a guide to career guidance (Gikopoulou, 2008). The theory was initially based on Parson's trait and factor ideas. Occupational orientation was initially proposed in 1966 but has since gone through different revisions (1973, 1985, 1992). Holland categorises personalities and environments into six types: artistic, investigative, realistic, conventional, enterprising, and social. People choose occupations by matching their personality type and the environment. In making occupational choices, the six personality types are related, and individuals may belong to more than one type. The work environment can also be categorised along the six personality types, and choices are made when

there is alignment or a match between the work environment and the personality type. Holland referred to this alignment as a congruence (Gikopoulou, 2008).

Developmental Self-Concept Theory.

The developmental self-concept theory was created by Donald Super (1957). The theory has gone through some adjustments in 1961, 1988 and 1992 to reflect its application and address gaps. Developmental self-concept theory was based on the ideas of Ginzberg (1951). The central aspect of the development of self-concept is that the human lifespan can be categorised into age groups (five stages). Persons develop different perceptions in different age groups, take on different tasks and prioritise the most relevant things to each stage in life. In other words, persons develop and consider their perceptions about themselves and their role in the world of work (Gikopoulou, 2008).

According to the theory, occupational preferences and competencies, an individual's life situations (defined as self-concepts) all change with time and experience as a person grows through the different stages of life. People, therefore, choose occupations that appeal to their interests during particular life stages. Implied within the development self-concept theory is the idea that persons adapt to different life stages and roles as they progress through different life stages. The theory acknowledges the importance of external influences (peer groups, family, community, economy, as well as individual factors (values, needs, interests, intelligence and aptitudes) in influencing career choices (Super, 1990).

The theory of occupational orientation relies on an individual's personality type to direct a suitable career path. While it acknowledges individuals can have more than one personality type, people need to identify the most dominant type to inform their career path. For example, a person with a primary investigative personality can take up the career of a biologist or anthropologist. An individual with an entrepreneurial personality excels as a sales or business person (Andreev, 2023).

Theory of Personality Development and Career Choice.

In 1956, Anne Roe developed the theory of personality development and career choice. The theory was inspired by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The theory links occupational satisfaction to basic needs based on experiences in early life and family influence.

Roe (1956) posited that occupations can be organised along the continuum of needs. She specified eight occupational groups in this regard. These occupations included business contact, organisation, technology, outdoor, science, general culture, and arts and entertainment. The levels of difficulty and responsibility involved in each occupation were then considered, and six occupational levels based on the degree of responsibility, capacity and skill were identified. These were professional and managerial (independent responsibility), professional and managerial, semi-professional and small business, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled (Roe, 1956). According to the theory of personality development and theory choice, individuals can be chosen based on their needs. Career choice is therefore a strategy to address or fulfil needs at different levels.

Overall, the six reviewed theories give a theoretical framework within which career choice and development takes place. Career guidance practitioners are meant to follow these theories in supporting individuals make career choices and development. The extent to which AVA's Career Guidance Programme practice is informed or aligned to any of the theories will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The third component of the plausibility check entailed primary data collection from programme participants. The results from this phase of plausibility check are presented in the next section below.

Results from Primary Data Collection

In addition to the programme theory evaluation, this study also investigated how the Career Guidance Programme was working from the perspectives of different stakeholders. These stakeholders included targeted youth, AVA programme staff, a hosting organisation and a donor agency. Accordingly, two FGDs and six individual interviews were held with the different categories of stakeholders (see Method Chapter). Thematic analysis findings are presented below:

The Value of the Career Guidance Programme

The first theme that emanated from the qualitative data collection was confirmation that the programme had been valuable and beneficial. All of the participants in the FGDs and individual interviews considered the Career Guidance Programme to be helpful in diverse ways.

They specified that it supported career planning, networking, personal development, and personal management. It also offered them opportunities to get employed and advance their careers, built their confidence, and empowered them with communication skills. These reasons became sub-themes and are discussed in more detail below.

Support Of Career Planning.

A total of 10 references were made on this sub-theme. In one of the FGDs and three individual interviews, participants of the programme detailed how the activities supported career planning. The career guidance received enabled the targeted youth to define an area of career development and set goals that were specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. This goal was referred to as a career vision, which is set in the present but projected for the future. As part of the programme, interviewees explained that they felt encouraged to be resilient in the pursuit of their career visions and that they felt supported in acting towards the attainment of their career goals. The quotations below illustrate this sub-theme.

"I did actually, I did. The reason am where I am today, ... the same way they encouraged me to not give up. Because I have always wanted to study, they have given me hope and encouraged me to continue applying and continue studying whatever I want to and here I am now", **Individual Interview Respondent 6.**

"They look out for you, they help you every step of the way to get you where you need to be", **Individual Interview Respondent 4.**

"... he would do an activity where he puts a picture up of a doctor and all the stuff that they have to go through. So, like, how many years they have to study. So, there's also the SMART plan. So, S-M-A-R-T, with realistic, the measurements, like the time...", **Individual Interview Respondent 3.**

Working Opportunities.

The sub-theme of being provided with valuable working opportunities emerged during one of the FGDs. The youth explained that the opportunity to work allowed them to advance their career. They could network between themselves and create connections with people in their host organisations or potential employers who participated in the career expos organised by AVA. They stated that this exposure to different professionals helped them to identify and make decisions on career choices, as per the quoted below.

"So, it is really important. I think the strategies that AVA and Life Matters used were amazing in letting us know more about other careers because on its own it set a different tone because it would show me that these two companies ... do not only want me to stop there. They actually want me to move forward in life so they were exposing me to more opportunities and showing me that it does not only end where they are or with what they are doing but there is more ... offered out there and they gave me a choice and a chance to actually sit down and choose where I can I go with all of that. So, I would say it is beautiful what they have done, and I would encourage more companies to invest in that as well", Participant in an FGD with Targeted youth.

Personal Management.

The idea of personal management as a valuable outcome of the programme was brought up during one of the interviews and discussed in one of the FGDs. The youth explained that through the career guidance activities, they managed themselves better. They stated specific examples, for instance, assuming responsibilities in their daily lives, working on self-improvement, time management and adopting professional behaviour in work settings. The two quotations below support how the career guidance led to the personal management of some of the youth.

"I would say for example the ones that they guided us to what we want to become or what to do when we are done with their programmes. Also, what they teach us on how to work on ourselves, taking responsibilities and stuff or working on self-esteem, so that kind of thing, were very useful to me", Individual Interview Respondent #6.

"Aaaah I just want to add on not the question you asked but am just looking at the phone now. We each got one of these phones to work from and this little app there was only that also showed us courses where they would teach you about time management, saving and stuff like that... you had to make sure you watch the videos and when you get questions of the words and I would have to complete it before you can send them off to say that look, I actually did it. And those things also helped you ... [on] how to conduct yourself in a workplace and stuff like that...", Participant in an FGD with targeted youth.

Personal Development.

As part of a discussion in one of the FGDs, the youth discussed why the intervention was valuable because it facilitated personal development. Through the various activities and training, the youth felt they understood themselves better and made an effort to improve their skills and develop self-discipline:

"It was like the self-understanding one, it was really helpful. I mean like without that information I don't think again I was going to be sitting here today ... So, it kinder challenged me a lot because I wouldn't just ignore the fact that I needed I was, coming

for more. You know after each and every training part of me wanted to go more, wanted to find more, wanted to read more", Participant in an FGD with targeted youth.

Self-esteem.

Finally, AVA's Career Guidance Programme was considered valuable because it contributed to improving the self-esteem of some of the FGD programme participants. These participants explained that the training on ethics and self-understanding enabled them to improve their self-esteem and confidence and communicate better during formal engagements such as job interviews. This can be viewed in the direct quote below:

"I have been able to communicate with people especially when I go for a job interview, you know what to say and how to say that to address people and how to speak and to look about if we have any job. I would say that it was useful yes and the different things that they explained about a place and like he said how you would address some. "Ya basically you learn a lot", Participant in FGD with targeted youth.

Outcomes of Career Guidance

As part of the primary data collection, the researcher sought to determine whether any short-term outcomes had taken place. Study participants provided feedback on the different changes experienced after they participated in the programme. These are discussed below.

Short-term Outcomes.

The qualitative analysis revealed that several short-term outcomes seemed to be achieved. These outcomes were clustered into the following themes: improved self-awareness, discovering passion, re-evaluating career choices, increasing job searching, exploring career paths, improving self-discipline, motivating young people, setting career goals and benchmarking with fellow young people. Detailed findings on these themes are presented below:

Self-awareness.

Six participants confirmed that the career guidance they received as part of the programme contributed to improved self-awareness. These participants went on further to explain how the career guidance self-development sessions enabled them to develop self-consciousness and take stock of their strengths (potentials) and weaknesses. They said that by knowing their strengths, they felt more motivated to choose a career. The improved self-awareness also helped them to develop emotional intelligence as they interacted with other

people in formal and informal spaces.

"Before I came to join the AVA family , " my emotions gets the best of me " was a phrase predominant in my life . Something I always struggled with was emotional intelligence. I found it extremely hard to be in control of my own emotions and also how I perceive the way others portray their emotions.

"The sessions around building my mental muscle helped me so much to self-reflect, speak kinder to myself and also other people. After spending a good amount of time participating in the sessions, I'm more conscious of, not what I say but , how I say things now...

"It's still a work in process, but the essence to mastering this is self-awareness, self-management , be sociable , and of course have empathy we all fighting silent battles.

*"In the beginning of this message I said , I always used the phrase " my emotions gets the best of me " . I can now confidently say I'm entirely in control of what I think , what I say and what I allow to affect me . Mind & body intertwined". **Testimony by Life Matters Programme participants for the year 2022, AVA Website).***

Passion.

Four respondents explained how the programme enabled them to discover what they are passionate about in terms of career options. For some youth, the Career Guidance Programme enabled them to re-evaluate career choices and make the necessary changes in career choices.

*"Firstly, I always wanted to be a teacher. Actually, teaching was my second choice. I wanted to be a radiographer. But then ever since I worked at AVA, me working with children and stuff, it grew the passion of me wanting to be a teacher more than me wanting to become a radiographer. I think the programme helped me to realise that I love teaching", **Individual Interview Respondent 6***

*"...The past 12 months has honestly been an amazing experience so far. It is a massive contribution to my personal growth and career development. I have discovered that I am so passionate about working with kids and that I have so much resilience, ambition and heart for the teaching field", **Testimony from Life Matters Participant, 2021 (AVA Website).***

Professional CV.

Two youths explicitly stated that their participation in the Career Guidance Programme enabled them to prepare appropriate and professional curriculum vitae for different job opportunities. They stated that their participation in professional development sessions enabled

them to review job adverts, identify job requirements and tailor a curriculum vitae to these requirements.

"So, when we had the career guidance the one thing that influenced me was, we see that when you look at a job that you are applying for and when you're asked after receiving for the job that you are applying for. So, you won't always get the same CV. So, with each job you have a different CV", Participant in an FGD with targeted youth.

"The one thing that stood out for me when it came to the career guidance program was that they planned with us and they told us that about the CV writing, a title, being punctual and things that the employee will be looking for. What employees look for, the detailed things", Participant in an FGD with targeted youth.

Increased Job Searching.

Two of the participants stated that they have become more proactive in job searching as a result of the programme. Instead of waiting for fate, they have become more determined to secure employment, as validated in the direct quote below;

"...it [Career Guidance Programme] helped me in terms of where else I can get the information from. So, there was I think that networking that helped me to find different routes of applying, different websites to apply to.", Participant in an FGD with targeted youth

Exploring Career Paths.

Another short-term outcome of the Career Guidance Programme was that it enabled two youths to explore different career paths. They stated that the job placements in schools to support learners with literacy and numeracy and mentorship sessions enabled them to explore careers that they had not thought about before. After the experience acquired from the job placements and interaction with life coaches (mentors), they become interested in specific careers.

"Initially, I wanted to work with a beauty company. However, after working on Life Matters Programme, I discovered I had passion for working with children. That is how I ended up choosing teaching as my career. We were exposed to different career paths during the programme but I found out I was interested in working with children. I went through all the options, but children are my passion", Individual Interview Respondent 4.

Set Career Goals.

As part of the FGD, it emerged that several youths were setting career goals and visions because they participated in the programme. As part of the professional development, they were

supported to identify their strengths and what they are passionate about, compare their perceptions of careers with their peers on the programme and did research on potential careers. They stated that the key outcome of this process was that they were able to sit and write down their career goals on a vision board provided by the programme staff. These career visions and goals were continuously reviewed during their involvement in the programme as evidenced by the feedback from the programme participant below;

"In my room I have my own vision boards set up already. So am walking down as I completed but the way you implement it in your own way in your life is really good and very helpful and the way even life matters stood for us is that they also made us to understand that looking beyond you use it as a way to get what you want but the best thing is to write it down, have it in front of you, write down whatever task or goal you want to achieve, set the time period like 3 months, 6 months maybe even a year even though not sure of what the goal is but at the end of the day it is going to benefit you. And for me am a visual person if I see it in front of me then, okay, I know that am getting close and if I look at my task every single day in front of me, I know what I need to work towards" **Participant in an FGD with Targeted Youth.**

Self-discipline.

In one FGD and interview, the participants confirmed that they had developed self-discipline as a result of the programme. This included them being more focused, reducing risk averseness, self-motivating themselves to explore careers, and benchmarking their career aspirations with their peers in the programme. This is reflected in the direct quotes below;

"And then number 2 one of the things there also taught us because most of the times when we were with Life Matters, we worked with volunteers like new people every day and so it was really important again to be disciplined you know and show respect but mostly be respective to the volunteers and also as well be comfortable. And I think that ethics part really helped me a lot because I was kinder struggling with that because at that time I was really deep in art that remember in art, it doesn't have a boundary. If I want to dye my hair I can do that and I was busy with fashion that time so I had these crazy designs but I was not allowed to wear those things especially at work. I was not allowed to come with my hair like that and I would understand why you know", **Participant in an FGD with Targeted Youth.**

"AVA and life matters has helped me discover that I am not afraid to take a risk and go the extra mile if needed", **Testimony by Life Matters Programme Participant.**

The above short-term or immediate outcomes translated into medium-term outcomes presented in the next section.

Medium-term Outcomes.

The qualitative data analysis revealed different medium-term outcomes linked to short-term outcomes detailed previously. The analysis revealed several medium-term outcomes were achieved, including increased confidence, work readiness skills developed, career decisions made, career guidance readiness skills acquired, enhanced emotional intelligence, improved personal behaviour, greater career clarity and income earned. Detailed findings on the above themes are presented below:

Increased Self-Confidence.

Five participants confirmed that their level of confidence has increased as a result of AVA's programme. They stated that the programme enabled them to identify and address their weaknesses. Some of the participants who were too shy to speak to strangers or suffered from stage fright were encouraged to practice communicating with different audiences. As part of this training, participants often made presentations to fellow participants as individuals or in groups. They stated that through these activities, they started to believe in themselves and grew in self-confidence. In addition, the participants also mentioned that the sessions on professional etiquette, formal dressing, and speech also facilitated their increased confidence. Two direct quotes are presented below;

*"I wasn't interested in teaching but I was a bit nervous because I wasn't sure if I would be able to handle it because I had stage fright but since last year when I got the opportunity of speaking in front of everybody, they sat me down they spoke to me they taught me how to have people skills, how to be confident how to be professional... I am very confident in what I am doing, and I love what I am doing. So, I feel like it gave me the push that I needed" **Individual Interview Respondent 4.***

*"How do you present yourself? Things like, when you arrive at a job what sort of expectations in terms of what you are wearing, how you present yourself and your attitude? So, I know AVA does a lot of work around attitude and not to have a victim mentality and to look at how you can present yourself in the most possible way to a future employer that would hopefully be able to give you a job... SI", **Individual Interview Respondent 1.***

Work Readiness Skills.

Four of the participants interviewed confirmed that they had acquired various work readiness skills from participating in the job placements as part of the programme. These placements provided them with an opportunity to be trained in the delivery of literacy and

numeracy lessons and how to support learners. It also introduced them to working in a structured environment guided by job descriptions and policies, where, on occasion, challenges needed to be overcome, all of which enabled them to develop work readiness:

"...one of the things there also taught us because most of the times when we were with Life Matters we worked with volunteers like new people every day and so it was really important again to be disciplined you know and show respect but mostly be respectful to the volunteers and also as well be comfortable. And I think that ethics part really helped me a lot because I was kinder struggling with that because at that time, I was really deep in art that remember in art, it doesn't have a boundary. If I want to dye my hair, I can do that and I was busy with fashion that time, so I had these crazy designs, but I was not allowed to wear those things especially at work. I was not allowed to come with my hair like that and I would understand why you know", Participant in an FGD with Targeted Youth.

Career Decisions Made.

Three participants confirmed that the Career Guidance Programme contributed to them making career decisions because they were exposed to different occupations through the job placements, the career expos and based on the research they conducted. Additionally, the professional development also helped in that these sessions enabled them to identify careers that they were passionate about.

"If you are not sure of what to do in the future, the program helps you to decide on that. Or what you want to do after this program. It helps you to work on yourself on you"
Individual Interview Respondent 6.

So, for me, it is actually a very nice experience. It actually placed me in the selection of teaching, a field that I have passion for now. So, that is why I am starting off as a teaching assistant so it actually showed me the direction in which I would like to go further to work in life", Respondent 4

Enhanced Emotional Intelligence.

Three participants achieved enhanced emotional intelligence. This was attributed to the personal development and self-management training where they needed to manage their emotions and control their temperament when interacting with other people.

"I would say the career program would help them to decide what you want exactly to do in the future. If you are not sure of what to do in the future, the program helps you to decide on that. Or what you want to do after this program. It helps you to work on yourself on you", Individual Interview Respondent 5

"So for me it is actually a very nice experience it actually placed me in the selection of teaching, a field that I have passion for now, so that is why I am starting off as a teaching assistant so it actually showed me the direction in which I would like to go further to work in life", Individual Interview Respondent 4.

Improved Professional Behaviour.

Improved professional behaviour was mentioned as a medium outcome linked to participation in the Career Guidance Programme in two FGDs and one key informant interview. Participants explained that the sessions on ethics contributed to enhancing their personal conduct in the workplace and when interacting with their peers. Some also mentioned how their time management, communication, and conflict resolution skills had also improved due to various programme activities. This is validated by the selected direct quotes below;

Their views taught me a lot about how to conduct myself in terms of the workplace but not just in the workplace but with my peers, with my colleagues. They taught me ethics about that, they taught me about being punctual also because I think that was a big part of me because I learnt a lot of things. But that session helped me a lot to understand that when you are in a work place there are certain standards that have to aim for and you just have to meet that because it is expected of you...I actually still implemented it [time management].I tried to be on time even if it is a minute before as long as am on time, I try to just be punctual as soon as possible and respect my colleagues who are around..."
Participant in and FGD with targeted youth.

Short Term Employment.

The Career Guidance Programme provided short-term employment to targeted youth (Groundedness=2; References=2). The programme uses employment-based training by securing job placements in schools supported by Life Matters Foundation. This enabled youth to secure employment during their engagement in the project. Some youth have gone on to secure employment in teaching and administration function of host organisations.

"[In] the beginning of 2021 I was in a local computer lab for my area to apply for jobs online so a friend of mine told me about AVA, like he worked there the previous year. So, he told me about AVA and gave me the contact. So, I did text AVA, they called me for an interview and then I passed the first interview. So, I was on the short list and then they also called us for the second interview because I was on the short list. So, I also passed the second interview and that is how I got the job from AVA. So, after that, they trained us in the responsibilities that we were going to do, which is numeracy and literacy. So, they were employing youth", Individual Interview Respondent 6.

Participation in career guidance enabled youth to earn income in form of a stipend

(Groundedness=1; References=1). Youth who are placed in different organisations earn a monthly stipend for the duration of their participation in the programme. The stipend is paid to them to enable them meet running expenses (transport and communication) as well as fulfil family obligations.

Long-Term Outcomes.

The content analysis revealed three themes linked to long-term outcomes of the Career Guidance Programme. These themes included securing employment, enrolment into post-matric education, the development of resilience and securing social capital.

Employment.

The analysis revealed youths secured employment in various fields after participation in AVA's Career Guidance Programme (Groundedness=4; References=9). The different skills on work and career readiness skills improved their employability and enabled them to search and successfully secure jobs. These participants were employed as teachers, administrators, human resource officers, programme managers and entrepreneurs. They credited the Career Guidance Programme with this success, as well as the social and alumni networks as part of the programme, which linked them to job opportunities.

Training and Education.

Enrolment in or completing post-matric training after participating in the Career Guidance Programme emerged as one of the long-term outcomes of the programme (Groundedness=2; References=3). Some of the programme participants (three participants) were undertaking training, diplomas and undergraduate training in education and public management. Their ability to enrol and or complete post-matric education was attributed to their ability to make career choices by the end of their participation in the programme.

Resilience.

Results also show that youth reported being more resilient compared to before enrolment in the Career Guidance Programme (Groundedness=1; Reference=1). The Career Guidance Programme taught the participants how to set career goals, work hard towards them, and withstand any challenges they may encounter along the way. The enhanced resilience was attributed to the psychosocial support they received as AVA participants.

"I think the psychosocial side of things is very important. It's getting them resilient, making sure that they have got the resilience to keep them going, and I think AVA does that really well. You know that whole 'we know it's tough, we know it's hard, we know the job market is terrible' but we need to persevere, we need to keep pushing and keep trying even when the odds are stuck against you, you gonna keep going. I think building that resilience in young people, forget about the other training parts of career stuff, that's vital for them to actually succeed", **Key Informant Interview Respondent.**

Social Capital.

Programme participants reported developing social capital due to their participation in the Career Guidance Programme (Groundedness=2; References=2). These youth have created links to fellow programme participants and other older programme participants through the programme alumni network. They meet once a year and share contacts and information on available opportunities.

Motivating Factors for Effective Youth Participation in the Career Guidance Programme.

During the study, participants were asked about the things that motivated them to continue and complete the Career Guidance Programme. Implicit within these motivating factors were key assumptions that enabled the programme to register positive outcomes. The analysis revealed three themes of factors motivating young people to stay and complete the programme. These factors included:

Having a proper programme support structure in place was cited as one of the critical factors in influencing the retention of youth on the programme and enabling them to transition to their career path. The support structure features mentioned included having programme staff to follow up and mentor them, providing them with stipends, and ensuring supervisors in host agencies give necessary work and social support.

Targeted young people were also motivated to remain in the programme due to the positive alignment between individual and programme objectives. These youth appreciated the added value of the programme to their career development and welfare. Youth who completed the programme felt that the programme offered better opportunities for them.

Self-efficacy or believing in oneself to undertake tasks and achieve results, was also considered an essential aspect of retention within the programme.

External Factors.

The qualitative analysis revealed different themes which constitute external factors which influence Career Guidance Programmes. These factors include:

Respondents reported that the quality of education system determine whether career guidance is effective or not. The nature of education system produces young people who are either career ready and can secure jobs or those that are not skilled enough to find employment

It also emerged that the economic background of career guidance participants impacted to the extent to which they effectively used career guidance services. Choice of career was influenced by parents and guardians. In addition, youth from poor backgrounds were under expectation to secure employment and earn income to support their families. The lack of appreciation from families or access to better paying tasks influenced attrition from the programme.

The analysis also revealed that access to resources such as facilities and services at community level is key in determining success of Career Guidance Programmes. Where unemployed youth accessed facilities such as job opportunities, computer and internet facilities to facilitate job searches or even job placements, such youth found career guidance more effective. The youth who were challenged in accessing such facilities found it hard to search and secure jobs.

Another factor which emerged from the analysis was the state of the local (national) economy in generating sufficient number of jobs and business opportunities. Slow down of and change in the structure of local economies affected extent to which youth secured employed. The shift from low skilled jobs to high skilled jobs renders unskilled youth unsuccessful in their job searches.

In addition to the above, research also identified additional external factors from participants. These factors included peer influence; partnership between AVA and other partners; availability of funds; level of labour market demand for certain skills; existence of support to start-ups of young people; negative events such as bereavement and existence of opportunities to further studies.

Areas for Improvement in AVA's Career Guidance Programme.

The researcher also gathered feedback on areas of improvement for the programme.

These improvements could make the programme more effective and responsive to the needs of programme participants. The analysis revealed that most of the areas for improvement were around the scope of the programme package (interventions/dose) and programme delivery modes.

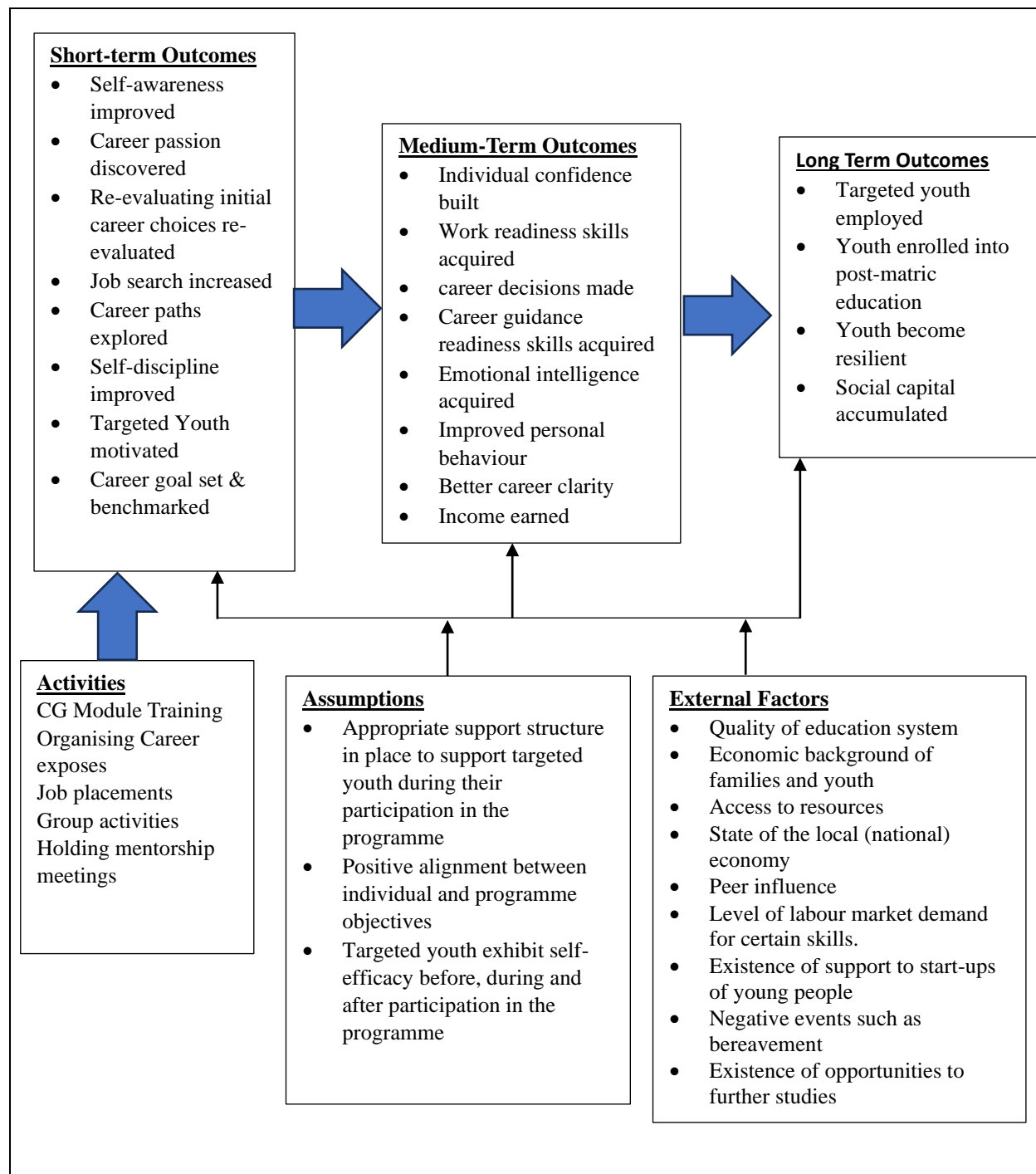
In terms of the content or scope of the programme, participants recommended exposure to more career fields, adopting job shadowing, including research on potential employers as part of career readiness, and linking interns to education opportunities in form of scholarships or bursaries. Participants felt that these added aspects could enhance the programme's ability to support participants.

Areas flagged for improvement in terms of the mode of programme delivery included extending the programme's duration to more than one year, offering an online career profile test, adopting e-meetings for some activities, and introducing group reflection activities.

Based on the findings from stakeholder feedback on the programme, the theory of action was extracted and is presented in Figure 3. This theory of action will be compared with the initial programme theory as part of the discussion of findings in the next chapter.

Figure 3

Career Guidance Action Theory (Developed by the Researcher based on study results)



Chapter 4: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter discusses the results presented in Chapter 3. In line with the evaluation objectives, it discusses the plausibility of career guidance theory, the extent to which AVA's Career Guidance Programme adopts feasible career guidance theories and standards in its implementation and whether any short-term outcomes were observed (based on subjective accounts of past programme participants).

Plausibility of the Initial Programme Theory

A plausibility check involves a critical review of the logic and plausibility of an intervention (Rossi et al., 2018). The plausibility check in this context entailed checking how the initial theory of change of AVA's Career Guidance Programme compares to the theory of change emerging from literature and social science research. Similarities are identified, and differences (gaps) are indicated. **Overall, the AVA's Career Guidance Programme theory is plausible** and the specified pathways are logical. A detailed discussion below is organised around the different elements of the theory of change.

Career Guidance Programme Resources/Inputs

AVA's Career Guidance Programme uses resources such as host sites, personnel, facilities and equipment, partners and stakeholders, and training materials to deliver the programme. These materials are comparable to what other programmes use. Similar programmes use financial aid, computers and curriculum-like training materials (Fein, 2012). Human resources as an input in the programme was similar to those documented in the reviewed studies (Yuxiao and Abdullah, 2023). Unlike AVA's career programme, other programmes use labour market information as a critical resource in programming (Otwine, 2022; Watts, 2013; Goodman & Hansen, 2005). Time was also considered an essential resource for Career Guidance Programmes (Otwine et al., 2022).

Career Guidance Activities

The initial programme theory reveals diverse Career Guidance Programme activities. Programme activities of similar interventions include coaching and mentoring sessions, work placements, career profiling, individual assignments, career counselling, tutoring (training) and

orientation to targeted youth. Such activities were also entrenched in studies undertaken by different researchers (Ako et al., 2020; Watts, 2013; Goodman & Hansen, 2005; Guichard, 2003). However, AVA's Career Guidance Programme had unique activities not undertaken by other programmes. Such activities included social media marketing posts, recruitment and induction of participants, networking activities, paying stipends, holding meetings with partners, organising career expos and progress monitoring of the development of programme participants.

The literature also revealed missing activities in the activity package of the Career Guidance Programme. These activities include individual learning plans, provision of career information, job simulations and shadowing, enterprise activities, and provision of labour market information (Jemini Gashi et al., 2023; Hur et al., 2018; Watts, 2013; Chireshe, 2012; Guichard 2003). AVA could consider these to address any other needs of programme participants and make the programme more efficacious.

Programme Outputs

AVA's Career Guidance Programme generates different outputs from its activities. The scope of outputs is broader compared to those documented in the literature review. However, outputs such as trained youth, career profile reports, and training manuals developed are what Crossland (2006) refers to as education and training services. The output of staff recruited or governance structure (Crossland, 2006) is not explicitly stated in the theory of change but implied in resource (input) specifications of the programme. Thus, the outputs in the ToC are congruent with social science research and literature.

Short-term Outcomes

The initial programme theory articulated nine short-term outcomes linked to different outputs. Meanwhile, the literature review does not define but refers to general casual pathways between outputs and short-term outcomes. Most of the short-term outcomes specified in the initial programme theory looked similar to those for similar interventions. The short-term outcomes of Career Guidance Programmes included youth building necessary career readiness competencies. The literature review revealed that career guidance interventions enabled participants to acquire work readiness skills (Gupta & Kothe, 2023; Martaningsih & Istiyono, 2019; Fein, 2012; Perry et al., 2009). Other short-term outcomes documented in the literature

include targeted youth being able to gain confidence in available opportunities, increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence, and being able to identify their passion and career resources identified.

The initial programme theory indicated youth tracking their career goals as a short-term outcome. The literature review refers to this outcome as career planning and goal setting as the primary outcome, which happens in the short run (Jemini Gashi et al., 2023).

The literature review also suggested career management skills as an outcome of career guidance, albeit as an intermediate outcome (Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Watts, 2013). Career management skills, which are accumulated from different skills and attitudes, can, therefore, be treated as intermediate outcomes. The short-term outcome of youth accessing greater career support is unique to AVA's Career Guidance Programme. There were however additional short-term outcomes linked to Career Guidance Programmes documented in the literature but not reflected in the initial programme theory. The feedback from targeted youth also alluded to most of the short-term outcomes specified in the initial programme theory. Specifically, unearthed short-term outcomes of the programme included improved self-awareness, identified career passion, improved self-discipline, and explored career paths. However, additional short-term outcomes were revealed. These included re-evaluating initial career choices, youth motivation, setting and benchmarking career goals, and increasing job searching. Re-evaluating initial career choices is similar to setting realistic job expectations in the literature (Jemini Gashi et al., 2023; Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Mayston, 2002). While the initial programme theory placed job search in the medium-term, the emerging theory of action places it in the short-term. There were cases of programme participants securing jobs before the completion of the cycle.

The qualitative analysis revealed that youth are motivated to pursue a career as a key outcome. This is similar to the development of optimism. However, the literature review placed this outcome in the medium-term (Watts, 2013). This outcome, however, fits in the short-term outcomes as it contributes to the retention of participants and career progression.

Medium-term Outcomes

From the research, most of the mid-term outcomes of AVA's Career Guidance Programme are similar to outcomes of similar interventions. Youth have professional curriculum vitae and

can go into [job] interviews confidently, which is partly similar to improved self-esteem as an intermediate outcome (Robertson, 2013) and short-term outcome of improved confidence (Gupta & Kothe, 2023; Ajufo, 2013; Donohue & Patton, 1998). The medium-term outcome of informed and inspired alums in the initial programme theory is equivalent to the development of social capital (Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Robertson, 2013; Fein, 2012). Youths apply to tertiary education because their interest is linked to improved occupational skills (Gupta et al., 2023; Martaningsi & Istiyono, 2019; Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Watts, 2013; Fein, 2012; Perry, 2009). Admission to, attendance and completion of an occupational training programme would lead to increased occupational knowledge. For AVA's Career Guidance Programme, occupational knowledge is acquired through employment-based placements (work readiness) and post-matric programmes.

While the initial programme theory places youth living independently at an intermediate outcome level, the literature review places it under long-term outcome. From the literature review, self-reliant individuals is equivalent to youth living independently (Ajufo, 2013). Self-reliant individuals is an impact of career guidance, which is linked to securing employment.

The intermediate outcomes of resourceful youth and youth who are financially independent are unique outcomes linked to AVA's different programme activities for the professional and personal development of targeted youth. On closer examination, a high career progression rate is an indicator to measure the ultimate outcomes of securing employment or enrolment into further studies (Perry et al., 2009).

This research suggests that AVA's programme was registering some of the initial intermediate outcomes among programme participants. Such outcomes included improved personal behaviour and individual confidence, which is similar to improved self-discipline specified as a short-term outcome in the initial programme theory. There are other intermediate outcomes not explicitly articulated but implied in the initial theory. These include career decisions made, better career clarity (achieved through career goal setting and adjustment) and income earned (indicated as a short-term outcome in initial programme but also a measure of employment). While the initial programme theory did not state such outcomes, the literature review showed such results as mid-term outcomes of career guidance interventions.

Impact of Career Guidance Programme

AVA's initial programme theory specified a set of four anticipated impacts or long-term outcomes. The long-term outcomes of youth enrolled for further education or securing employment (salaried or self-employed) are similar to the impact of enrolment into education programmes and reduced unemployment in the literature, respectively. Youth creating sustainable lives for themselves is similar to increased job security and sustainable incomes, as per the results of the literature review. The outcome of youth being socially responsible was unique among the anticipated impacts but similar to the anticipated impact of reduced frequency and rate of crime.

The literature review also reported several anticipated impacts of career guidance, which are not captured in the initial programme theory. These impacts can be classified as policy-level or societal-level impacts (Maguire & Killeen, 2003; Mayston, 2002). These impacts include improved functioning of labour markets; reduced unemployment benefits; increased job security and sustainable incomes; improved well-being; increased tax revenue collection; narrowing of national fiscal deficit; reduction in [public] health insurance; increase in the gross domestic product; and change in the structure of the economy. Some of these policy-level impacts apply in given policy contexts. For example, where there are no unemployment benefits (grants and free healthcare), such outcomes do not apply.

The exclusion of policy-level impacts makes AVA's programme theory reflect a practitioner's point of view and not the policymakers' perspective (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). Career guidance practitioners view career guidance from a qualitative and societal point of view as opposed to policymakers who measure career guidance outcomes in quantitative terms (Maguire & Killeen, 2003).

The feedback from programme participants suggested that some of the long-term outcomes appeared to take place, including targeted youth being employed, enrolled on post-matric education programmes, being self-reliant, and accumulating social capital.

Programme Assumptions

The initial programme theory of AVA's Career Guidance Programme specified four assumptions which must be upheld for the programme to be effective. This research seemed to

suggest that these assumptions are shared with similar interventions. The literature review revealed one additional assumption, which is implicit but not specified in AVA's ToC. For a Career Guidance Programme to be effective, there is an assumption that labour market information exists to enable participants to identify and explore employment opportunities (Otwine et al., 2022; Biavaschi et al., 2012).

The feedback from targeted youth were similar for two assumptions. Inherent within the motivating factors was the assumption that there is a positive alignment between the aspirations of the programme and those of targeted youth. Additionally, the existence of the proper programme structure was vital to ensuring retention and completion of the programme.

The feedback from stakeholders indicated the assumption that youth are assumed to have self-efficacy or believe in themselves when undertaking tasks to achieve positive outcomes. This is similar to youth appreciating the value of career guidance.

The initial programme theory assumption that youth are interested in wanting to create a better future for themselves and appreciate the Career Guidance Programme as one opportunity to do so is appropriately summarised into an assumption revealed by programme participants: targeted young people were motivated by positive alignment between individual and programme objectives. The other two assumptions were almost similar but phrased differently. The assumption that AVA staff are skilled to support youth in different Career Guidance Programme activities during and after completion of the programme and that there is a mutual interest between AVA and partners to support continued implementation of the Career Guidance Programme, is similar to "Having a proper programme support structure in place".

External Factors Influencing Career Guidance

The literature review and the feedback from targeted youth shared similarity on four external factors documented in the initial programme theory. However, the literature review revealed two additional external factors which influence career guidance. These external factors also emerged in the qualitative data analysis from targeted youth. The two factors include the economic conditions of the local and national economies ((Biavaschi et al., 2012; Fein, 2012; Ültanır, 2012) and government policy on labour, career guidance and investment (Yuxiao & Abdullah, 2023; Otwine et al., 2022; Crossland, 2006).

The feedback from targeted youth revealed a longer list of external factors (11 factors) than those specified in the initial programme theory (four factors). This means that there are more external factors influencing career guidance efficacy than those specified by AVA. However, some of the external factors were discussed were assumptions (e.g. availability of funds, partnership between AVA and partners-support structure). Nevertheless, the list of external factors was updated to reflect feedback from targeted youth.

Career Guidance Standards

AVA's Career Guidance Programme practice reflects adherence to some career guidance standards. AVA regularly collects feedback from programme participants. The programme uses qualified career guidance experts to develop training modules, conduct training and mentor targeted youth. LifeMatters Foundation adequately resources the programme. The programme also has clear objectives, which point to its efficacy. These practices reflect standard domains of an organisation, people, output or outcome and consumption (Hooley & Rice, 2019). The practice of regular feedback assessments also points to continuous improvement of the programme as a critical quality assurance measure (Simon, 2014; Watts, 2013).

Watts (2013) recommends the provision of career information before, during and at the end of the participation in a Career Guidance Programme. AVA's programme participants are provided with this information during their stay on the programme. Participants regularly update their career profiles as they advance in their participation in the programme. Participants are encouraged to monitor their own career goals as they work in host organisations. This supports the fact that the Career Guidance Programme adopts measures for quality assurance for the programme.

However, some elements of the standards were not explicit. This included the existence of career guidance policy (policy), ethics (process), and some elements of internal professional standards (people). The programme was also not certified or accredited to any international or local standards agencies recommended for such programmes (Simon, 2014).

Use of Social Science Career Development Theories

The literature review examined six career development theories which influence career guidance practice. This research aimed to check whether any theories informed AVA's career

guidance practice. AVA's career guidance practice draws from all the five reviewed career development theories, albeit the magnitude of elements used varies. The learning theory of career choice and counselling (Klumboltz, 1976), which has been revised to the learning theory of careers counselling (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996), is the most dominant theory informing AVA's career guidance practice. This could be attributed to the fact that the programme targets unemployed youth and helps them secure employment or advance their education as its central aspiration. The theory is relatively more straightforward to use compared to other reviewed theories.

Alignment To Learning Theory Of Career Choice And Counselling.

AVA's career guidance combines experience, training and mentoring. The approach contains elements of personal development, professional development, and progression development (securing work or enrolling in further studies). Through work-based experience or training, programme participants are able to make career choices. This element is related to the postulation that career choices are based on diverse experiences, and the nature of the world emerges through direct or indirect occupation education (Klumboltz, 1976). The theory also prescribes that career decision-making is taught to career counselling clients. This is reflected in AVA's professional development training, where participants are supported to develop, monitor and adjust their career goals. AVA's programme facilitator roles are to enable participants to identify their strengths to deploy and weaknesses to correct. Klumboltz (1976) prescribes this as a critical role for career counsellors.

AVA's career guidance practice also reflects different issues to be considered when supporting programme participants with career decision-making, as defined by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996). AVA's Career Guidance Programme enables participants to explore new activities. It enables them to be resilient or cope with stress during their search for work and actual work. Participants take action to improve themselves or search for jobs, and programme staff are mentors and coaches of programme participants. All these are well aligned with the theory in reference.

AVA programme staff or facilitators work as mentors and coaches. This is an extra role for counsellors, in addition to providing career information (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). The programme uses diverse strategies to support career development. These strategies include work

placement, structured training and information on how to facilitate literacy and numeracy in primary schools. These activities are similar to the use of job clubs, work simulations and occupational information resources recommended in the learning theory of career choice and counselling theory (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996).

Alignment To Other Career Guidance Theories.

This research also showed that AVA's career guidance practice draws from the traits and factor theory (Persons, 1908) and occupational orientation theory (Holland, 1992). Programme participants develop career profile reports during initial stages of their participation in the programme. The career profile identifies the strengths of individuals against which they identify a suitable career. The strengths are akin to traits, while factors are akin to factors or occupations. A chosen career could be equivalent to a primary interest for the participant, as suggested by Holland (1992).

Furthermore, AVA's career guidance practice uses some elements from the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). The programme undertakes self-awareness training, which enables participants to discover their strengths, weaknesses and passion. Implied within this training is developing self-efficacy, which is a central tenet of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). By supporting programme participants in identifying their strengths and passions, the programme supports them to develop self-expectations in terms of what they can accomplish as advanced by Bandura (1976)

A small element of the theory of personality development and career choice (Roe, 1956) is also reflected in AVA's career guidance practice. The programme is cognisant of the family's influence on career decision-making. This was a key external factor identified in the theory of personality development and career choice (Roe, 1956).

AVA's Career Guidance Programme borrows some limited aspects of the developmental self-concept theory (Supper, 1957). Programme participants are unemployed youth who have challenges to continue with post-matric education. AVA's programme, therefore, enabled them to adapt to ever-changing life challenges. The theory in question promotes adjustment according to age group. In addition, AVA also acknowledges the influence of families on career decision-making. This is a critical external factor identified in the development of self-concept theory.

Occurrence of Short-Term Outcomes of Career Guidance

In addition to the theory evaluation, this research sought to investigate whether programme participants experienced any of the short-term outcomes of the programme. Qualitative responses suggested that eight short-term outcomes were achieved. These outcomes included improved self-awareness, identified career passion, career goals set & benchmarked, and improved self-discipline. There were additional outcomes reported by participants which were not specified in the initial programme theory. These included re-evaluating initial career choices, increased job searching, explored career paths, and motivated youth.

Limitations of the Research

Most of the career guidance efficacy literature search revolves around career guidance implemented in educational or school learning environments. There was limited literature on career guidance programmes implemented within the context of volunteering as a strategy for addressing youth unemployment. This limited the availability of literature used for the theory evaluation for the career guidance programme under evaluation.

The research has drawn on literature from different contexts, both within and outside South Africa. The literature from South Africa is limited compared that from outside South Africa. These contexts could be having unique features (differences) which may not be comparable and should be accounted for in the interpretation and use of findings.

The scope of the research focused on six prominent career development theories which are considered influential in career guidance service provision. However, career guidance theories are diverse, and including all existing theories was not possible for the scope of this research.

Non-probability sampling was used to source the sample of AVA participants. The evaluator wanted to obtain as many participants as possible and therefore did not impose eligibility criteria other than that they completed the programme. If more participants responded favourably to the request, the evaluator could have chosen participants based on education level, community, cohort, etc. but this was not possible with the small sample size.

Recommendations

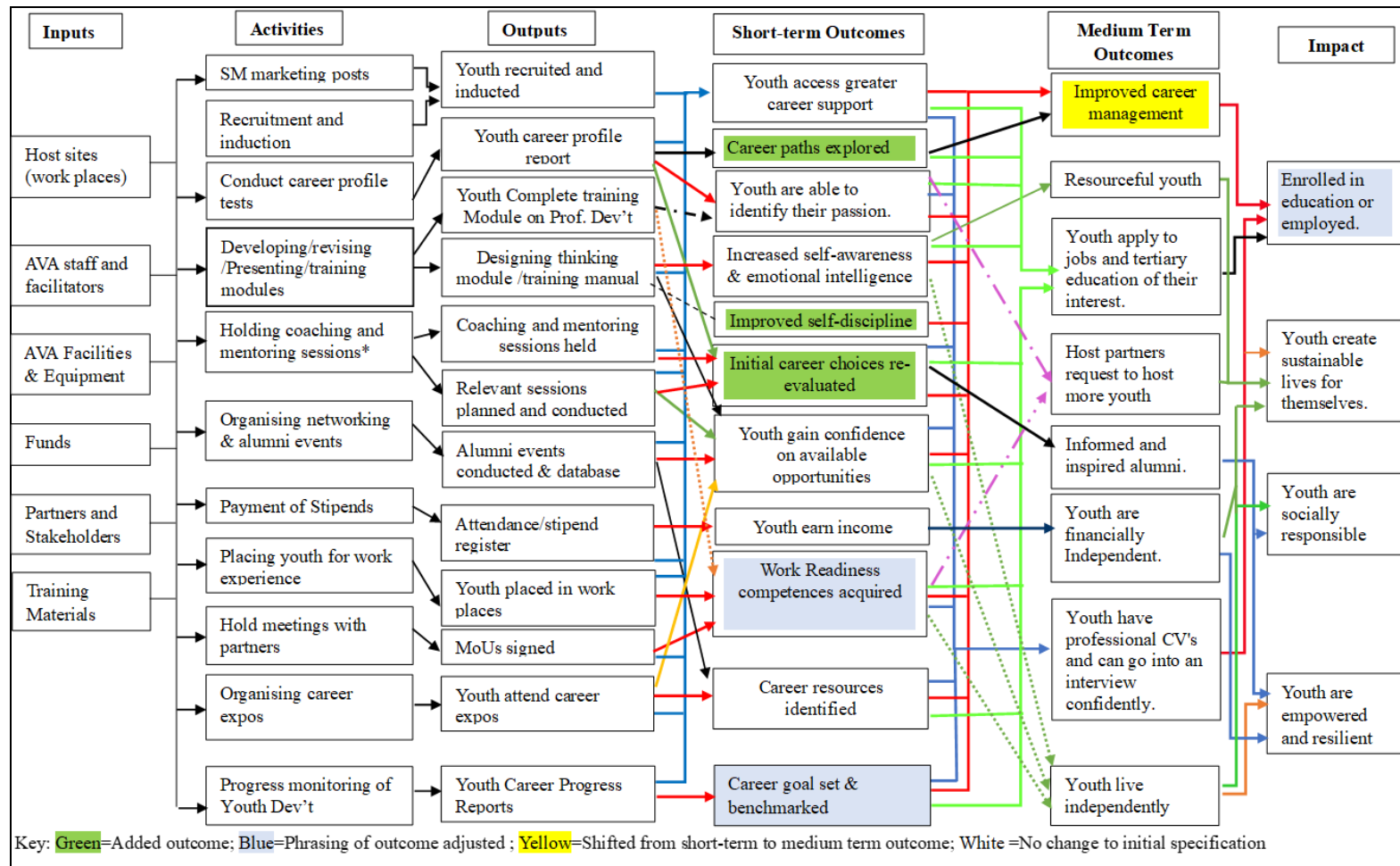
From the results and discussion of findings, the following recommendations emerge:

Final Programme Theory

Overall, the initial programme theory of AVA's career guidance was plausible. Most of the elements compare well to similar interventions as documented in the literature review and feedback from programme participants. The initial programme theory is adjusted considering plausibility findings as well as the results from programme participants. The final programme theory (Figure 4) reflects the uniqueness of AVA's Career Guidance Programme. In the figure, some components have been added (colour green); some moved/shifted (colour yellow), wording changed (colour blue), and the rest maintained (white) as proposed in the initial programme theory. Assumptions and risks are also proposed for the theory to hold.

Figure 4

Final Programme Theory of AVA's Career Guidance Programme (derived from initial programme theory with adjustments by the Researcher)



Programme Assumptions

- 1) There is a mutual interest between AVA and Partners to support the continued implementation of the Career Guidance Programme;
- (2) Funders are interested in AVA's work. Funders see the direct contribution of AVA's work to their organisation's aspirations;
- (3) Youth are interested in wanting to create a better future for themselves and appreciate the Career Guidance Programme as one opportunity to do so;
- (4) AVA Staff are skilled to support youth in different Career Guidance Programme activities during and after completion of the programme.

External Factors

- a) Quality of education system
- b) Economic background of families and youth
- c) Access to resources required to advance careers within the community
- d) State of the local (national) economy
- e) Peer influence
- f) Level of labour market demand for certain skills.
- g) Existence of support to start-ups of young people
- h) Negative events such as bereavement
- i) Existence of opportunities to further studies

Programming Recommendations

AVA should consider developing Career Guidance Programme standards to guide the implementation of its programme. The standards could define AVA's career guidance policy, ethics in the provision of guidance services and internal professional standards. The organisation can also seek certification with national or international standard agencies as part of quality assurance of its Career Guidance Programme.

AVA should consider reviewing the scope of its programme package to cater for the emerging needs of programme participants. Additional activities to be included could be exposure to more career fields, the use of job shadowing, including research on potential employers as part of career readiness coaching, monitoring the aspirations of interns, and linking interns to education opportunities in the form of scholarships or bursaries.

Areas For Further Research

This research focused predominantly on establishing whether the client's ToC was plausible. This was AVA's evaluation request and information needs because the programme's design developed over time without a formal process. Short-term outcomes were included to give the client a sense of whether participants were experiencing positive change because of the programme. This would be the logical next step, conducting a rigorous outcomes evaluation.

Researchers could conduct evaluations on different career guidance interventions that target unemployed youth in Africa. These further investigations may help us to understand the appropriateness and efficacy of career development theories in career guidance programming, quality assurance in Career Guidance Programmes for unemployed youth, and an impact evaluation of career guidance interventions targeting unemployed youth in Africa.

Conclusion

This research sought to provide answers to five research objectives and corresponding evaluation questions. These included extracting and documenting the initial programme theory; benchmarking AVA's Career Guidance Programme's programme theory and approach with other Career Guidance Programmes as well as social science principles for such interventions; identifying areas for improvement in the AVA's Career Guidance Programme's programme theory; refining the programme theory; and finally concluding whether any short-term outcomes of the programme have been observed.

The initial programme was documented and contained different elements of the theory of change and action, underlying assumptions and external factors. Overall, the initial programme theory seems to be plausible and specified pathways seemed to be sound. A final programme theory has been suggested as part of the recommendations.

AVA's Career Guidance Programme seems to be heavily aligned to learning theory of careers counselling (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). AVA's approach entails training unemployed youth to make career decision based on work-based experience, mentorship by career guidance facilitators and exposure to the employment world.

Based on engagements with programme participants, the programme seemed to bear some short-term results aligned to the initial programme theory but also confirmed by available literature reviewed. Some extra short-term outcomes are also identified and utilised in refinement of programme theory.

Overall, AVA is doing a commendable job in supporting career development among targeted unemployed youth. The adopted Career Guidance Programme theory may contribute to improving the programme design and planning. Some proposals have been made on subjecting the programme to quality assurance and expansion of scope of interventions to address emerging needs of its direct programme participants.

References

- Van Aardt, I. (2012). A review of youth unemployment in South Africa, 2004 to 2011. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 36(1), 54-68.
- Action Volunteers Africa (Undated). Annual Report: March 2019 – February 2020, Web, https://uploads.ssl.webflow.com/574e8a014ab1e3ad57447cbd/6013fd4f47b2bdee6d22f73b_AVA%20Annual%20Report%202019-2020.pdf
- Ajufo, B. I. (2013). Challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria: Effective career guidance as a panacea. *African research review*, 7(1), 307-321. DOI:10.4314/afrev.v7i1.21
- Ako, J. A., Obinne, A. D., & Ezekiel, A. J. (2020). A Quantitative Study of Career Counselling and Graduate Youths Unemployment in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. https://www.africanscholarpublications.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/AJCER_Vol18_No8_Sept_2020-2.pdf
- Altman, M. (2022). Trajectories for South African employment after COVID-19. *South African Journal of Science*, 118(5-6), 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2022/13289>
- Baah-Boateng, W. (2016). The youth unemployment challenge in Africa: What are the drivers? *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 27(4), 413-431. doi:10.1177/1035304616645030
- Bandura, A. (1977) Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change, *Psychological Review*, 84, 191–215. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191>
- Bandura, A. (1997) *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: Freeman
- Van Belle, S. B., Marchal, B., Dubourg, D., & Kegels, G. (2010). How to develop a theory-driven evaluation design? Lessons learned from an adolescent sexual and reproductive health programme in West Africa. *BMC Public Health*, 10(1), 1-10. DOI: 10.1186/1471-2458-10-741
- Betz, N. E. (2004). Contributions of self-efficacy theory to career counseling: A personal perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 52(4), 340-353.
- Bhorat, H., Papier, J., Vally, S., & Robinson, M. (2006). Youth unemployment and education in South Africa. *Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust Dialogue. Cape Town*.
- Biavaschi, C., Eichhorst, W., Giulietti, C., Kendzia, M. J., Muravyev, A., Pieters, J., ... & Zimmermann, K. F. (2012). Youth unemployment and vocational training. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2158300>
- Chetty, R., Beharry-Ramraj, A., & Gurayah, J. R. (2022). The impacts of Covid-19 on youth

- entrepreneurship in South Africa. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 2022(si1), 223. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_affrika1_v2022_nsi1_a13
- Chireshe, R. (2012). Career guidance and counselling provisions at a South African University: Career advisors' reflections. *The Anthropologist*, 14(4), 305-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2012.11891251>
- Crites, J. O. (1987). *Evaluation of career guidance programs: Models, methods, and microcomputers* (No. 317). National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Ohio State University. https://books.google.co.ug/books?hl=en&lr=&id=j_sgH4OWPgMC&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=evaluation+of+career+guidance+programmes&ots=JuiKVGMGIM&sig=XHT6sdLpSDLHlk_d3XS5rth4Abg&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=evaluation%20of%20career%20guidance%20programmes&f=false
- Crossland, L. D. (2006). The development and evaluation of a career guidance centre for historically disadvantaged learners in Zululand, South Africa. University of Zululand, Kwazulu Natal,
- Crowley, A. D. (1981). Evaluating the impact of a third-year careers education programme. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 9(2), 207-213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069888108258216>
- Dagume, M. A., & Gyekye, A. (2016). Determinants of youth unemployment in South Africa: Evidence from the Vhembe district of Limpopo province. *Environmental Economics*, 7(4), 59-67. DOI:10.21511/ee.07(4).2016.06
- Dunwoodie, K., Macaulay, L., & Newman, A. (2023). Qualitative interviewing in the field of work and organisational psychology: Benefits, challenges and guidelines for researchers and reviewers. *Applied Psychology*, 72(2), 863-889.
- De Lannoy, A., Graham, L., Patel, L., & Leibbrandt, M. (2020). Why is youth unemployment so intractable in South Africa? A synthesis of evidence at the micro-level. *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*, 3, 115-131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43151-020-00012-6>
- Dodd, V., Hanson, J., & Hooley, T. (2022). Increasing students' career readiness through career guidance: measuring the impact with a validated measure. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(2), 260-272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2021.1937515>
- Donaldson, S. I. (2007). *Program theory-driven evaluation science: Strategies and applications*. Routledge.
- Donohue, R., & Patton, W. (1998). The effectiveness of a career guidance program with long-term unemployed individuals. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 35(4), 179-194. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.1998.tb01000.x>

- El Nagggar, M. A., Mohamed, R. A., & Almaeen, A. H. (2021). The effect of career guidance on undergraduate medical students' specialty preferences. *JPMA*, *71*(1808).
<https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.236>
- Fein, D. J. (2012). *Career pathways as a framework for program design and evaluation* (Vol. 30).
OPRE Report # 2012-30, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/index.html>.
- Foong, L. M. (2007). Understanding of SWOT analysis. Available online from [http/article.tqmcasestudies.com/free-tqm-ebook/swot-analysis.pdf](http://article.tqmcasestudies.com/free-tqm-ebook/swot-analysis.pdf).
- Frey, B. (2018). *The SAGE encyclopedia of educational research, measurement, and evaluation* (Vols. 1-4). SAGE Publications, Inc. DOI: 10.4135/9781506326139
- Gikopoulou, N. (2008). Report on effective career guidance. *Career Guide*, EPINOIA S.A.
https://eunec.eu/sites/www.eunec.eu/files/members/attachments/report_on_effective_career_guidance.pdf
- Goodman, J., & Hansen, S. (2005). Career development and guidance programs across cultures: The gap between policies and practices. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *54*(1), 57-65. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2005.tb00141.x>
- Graham, L., & Mlatsheni, C. (2015). Youth unemployment in South Africa: Understanding the challenge and working on solutions. *South African child gauge*, *2*, 51-59
- Guichard, J. (2003). Career counseling for human development: An international perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *51*(4), 306-321.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2003.tb00612.x>
- Gupta, P., Datta, A., & Kothe, S. (2023). Developing Employability Skills in Vulnerable Youth: designing logic model framework and outcome evaluation using quasi-experiment. *World Development Sustainability*, *2*, 100045. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wds.2023.100045>
- Hatry, H. P., Newcomer, K. E., & Wholey, J. S. (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- Hooley, T., & Dodd, V. (2015). The economic benefits of career guidance. Web:
<https://repository.derby.ac.uk/item/924qx/the-economic-benefits-of-career-guidance>
- Hooley, T., & Rice, S. (2019). Ensuring quality in career guidance: A critical review. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, *47*(4), 472-486.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2018.1480012>
- Hooley, T., & Rice, S. (2019). Ensuring quality in career guidance: A critical review. *British*

- Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 47(4), 472-486.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2018.1480012>
<https://repository.derby.ac.uk/item/980qw/assessing-the-benefits-of-career-guidance>
- Hur, Y., Cho, A. R., Song, E. J., & Kim, S. (2018). Evaluation of a systematic career coaching program for medical students in Korea using the Career Readiness Inventory. *Journal of Educational Evaluation for Health Professions*, 15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3352/jeehp.2018.15.10>
- Ismail, Z., & Kollamparambil, U. (2015). Youth unemployment duration and competing exit states: What hides behind long spells of black youth unemployment in South Africa?. *African Development Review*, 27(3), 301-314. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8268.1215>
- Andreev, I. (2023), Career Development Theories, <https://www.valamis.com/hub/career-development-theories>
- Jemini Gashi, L., Bërxulli, D., Konjufca, J., & Cakolli, L. (2023). Effectiveness of career guidance workshops on the career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career goals of adolescents: an intervention study. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 28(1), 2281421.
- Jubane, M. (2020). Strategies for reducing youth unemployment in South Africa. *Jubane, Marvelous, Strategies for reducing Youth Unemployment in South Africa (April 28, 2021)*. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3835752>
- Kaburise, P. (2016). Improving soft skills and communication in response to youth unemployment. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, 11(2), 87–101. DOI: 10.1080/18186874.2016.1248061
- Keumala, E., Nurihsan, J., & Budiamin, A. (2018). The development of career learning program with modeling technique to improve student career awareness. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, 1(2), 53-61. <https://doi.org/10.25217/igcj.v1i2.270>
- Krumboltz, J. D., Mitchell, A. M., & Jones, G. B. (1976). A Social Learning Theory of Career Selection. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 6(1), 71-81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001100007600600117>
- Lam, D., Leibbrandt, M., & Mlatsheni, C. (2009). Education and youth unemployment in South Africa. In *Labor markets and economic development* (pp. 90-109). Routledge.
- Nsomba et al., (2021), Analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on micro, small and medium sized enterprises in South Africa, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, https://www.compcom.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SMEs-COVID-19-in-South-Africa_Final-Report_CCRED-20210510-003.pdf

- Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Henry, G. T. (2018). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Sage publications.
- Lau, A. (1995). Undergraduates' perceptions and evaluations of career guidance activities: A Hong Kong study. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 23(2), 219-230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069889508253007>
- Leung, S. A. (2008). The big five career theories. In *International handbook of career guidance* (pp. 115-132). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Mago, S. (2018). Urban youth unemployment in South Africa: Socio-economic and political problems. *Commonwealth Youth and Development*, 16(1), 1-19, DOI: 10.25159/2663-6549/1996
- Maguire, M., & Killeen, J. (2003). Outcomes from Career Information and Guidance Services. ERIC, National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/26/53/2495163.pdf>.
- Marin, A., & Wellman, B. (2011). Social network analysis: An introduction. *The SAGE handbook of social network analysis*, Sage.
- Martaningsih, S. T. (2018). Evaluation of career guidance program in vocational high school. In *SHS Web of Conferences* (Vol. 42, p. 00093). EDP Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20184200093>
- Martaningsih, S. T., & Istiyono, E. (2019). Evaluation Model of Career Counseling Program in Vocational High School. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 8(2), 318-329. DOI: 10.11591/ijere.v8i2.14986
- Marumo, P. O., & Sebolaaneng, M. E. (2019) Assessing the state of youth unemployment in South Africa: A discussion and examination of the structural problems responsible for unsustainable youth development in South Africa, *Sabinet African Journal*, 17(3), 13477- 13485, <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1965c20157>
- Mayston, D. (2002). Assessing the benefits of career guidance. University of Derby, Centre Guidance Studies, Centre for Performance Evaluation and Resource Management.
- Mitchell, L. K. (1996). Krumboltz's learning theory of career choice and counseling. *Career choice and development*, 3, 233-280.
- Morra-Imas, L. G., & Rist, R. C. (2009). *The road to results: Designing and conducting effective development evaluations*. World Bank Publications.
- Mseleku, Z. (2022). Youth Employment Recovery in the Post-Covid-19 Economy: The Potential Role of Education and Training. *Commonwealth Youth & Development*, 20(2).
- Nakazwe, K. C., & Chanda, P. (2018). Monitoring and Evaluation Designs in G. Hapunda, (Ed.)

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for Projects, Programmes or Policies (1st ed.).
Riderprint BV

- National Guidance Research Forum (2024), Theory of Guidance Practice: Making sense of career theories...a practitioner's perspective.
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/ngrf/effectiveguidance/improvingpractice/theory/#:~:text=The%20first%2C%20Career%20Theory%2C%20is,these%20theories%20are%20inter%2Drelated.> (Accessed on January 10, 2024)
- Nayak, U. Theories of Career Development: An analysis. *Indian Journal of Natural Sciences*, 23515-23523. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344414923>
- OECD (2004): Career Guidance: a Handbook for Policy Makers. Paris: OECD
- Otwine, A.T., Matagi, L., Kiweewa, J.M., & Ainamaani, H.E. (2022). Efficacy of career guidance and counselling among secondary schools in Uganda. *African Journal of Career Development*, 4(1), a55. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajcd.v4i1.55>
- Patel, L., Khan, Z., & Englert, T. (2020). How might a national minimum wage affect the employment of youth in South Africa? *Development Southern Africa*, 37(1), 147–161. DOI: 10.1080/0376835X.2018.1552556
- Pavlak, M. F. (1983). Developing a Career Guidance Program for Delinquent Youth. *Journal of Career Education*, 10(2), 111-120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089484538301000205>
- Perry, J. C., Dauwalder, J. P., & Bonnett, H. R. (2009). Verifying the efficacy of vocational guidance programs: Procedures, problems, and potential directions. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 57(4), 348-357. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2009.tb00121.x>
- Robertson, P. J. (2013). The well-being outcomes of career guidance. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 41(3), 254-266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2013.773959>
- Rogers, P. J., & Weiss, C. H. (2007). Theory-based evaluation: Past, present, and future. *New Directions for Evaluation*, Vol. 114, 63–81. DOI: 10.1002/ev.225
- Roy, S., (2021), Career Development Theory: 9 Popular career counseling theories Explained <https://unremot.com/blog/career-development-theory/>
- Ryan, T. (2013). *Sample size determination and power*. John Wiley and Sons. DOI: 10.1002/9781118439241.ch2
- Savickas, M. L. (1984). Career maturity: The construct and its measurement. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 32(4), 222–231. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-585X.1984.tb01585.x>

- Simon, A. (2014). Quality assurance in university guidance services. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 42(2), 181-198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2013.869789>
- Simon, M. (2011). Assumptions, limitations and delimitations. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=assumptions&btnG=#d=gs_cit&t=1704386778968&u=%2Fscholar%3Fq%3Dinfo%3A7RrOsUnzMyMJ%3Ascholar.google.com%2F%26output%3Dcite%26scirp%3D0%26hl%3Den
- Super, D. E. (1957). *The psychology of careers; an introduction to vocational development*. Harper & Bros..
- Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks, *Career choice and development: Applying contemporary theories to practice* (pp. 197–261). Jossey-Bass.
- Taplin, D. H., Clark, H., Collins, E., & Colby, D. C. (2013). Theory of change. Technical papers: a series of papers to support development of theories of change based on practice in the field. ActKnowledge, New York, NY, USA.
- Trading Economics (2021). *Youth unemployment rate*, web, <https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/youth-unemployment-rate>. Transdisciplinarity, 11:2, 87-101, DOI: 10.1080/18186874.2016.1248061
- Ültanır, E. (2012). The factors affecting career guidance and current status of career guidance services in Turkey. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 48(1), 135-147. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1032792>
- Vakalisa, N. C. (2005). Unemployment in South Africa on the rise: Are schools and universities to blame? *Africa Education Review*, 2(1), 40-58. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC31794>
- Watts, A. G. (2013). Career guidance and orientation in UNESCO (2013). *Revisiting global trends in TVET: Reflections on theory and practice*, 239-273. <https://www.tecnico profesional.mineduc.cl/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Revisiting-Global-Trends-in-TVET.pdf#page=249>
- Webb, C. (2021). “These aren’t the jobs we want”: Youth unemployment and anti-work politics in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. *Social Dynamics, A journal of African studies*, Vol. 47, 2021 - Issue 3372-388. DOI: 10.1080/02533952.2021.1906148
- World Bank (2024), World Development Indicator; South Africa Youth Unemployment Rate 1991-2024, <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/zaf/south-africa/youth-unemployment-rate>>South Africa Youth Unemployment Rate 1991-2024. www.macrotrends.net. Retrieved 2024-11-11.

- Yu, D. (2013). Youth unemployment in South Africa since 2000 revisited. *Documentos de trabajo económico*, 4, 13.
- Yuxiao, D., & Abdullah, S. M. B. S. (2023). Evaluating the Impact of School Career Guidance and Counseling on Subject Choice Among Rural Students: A Case Study of X High Schools in Guizhou. *Migration Letters*, 20(S3), 934-943.
<https://migrationletters.com/index.php/ml/article/view/3979>
- Yin, R. K. (2003). Designing case studies. *Qualitative Research Methods*, 5, 359-386, Web
https://ocw.ui.ac.id/pluginfile.php/1322/mod_folder/content/0/CH%202_Robert%20K.%20Yin%20Case%20Study%20Research_%20Design%20and%20Methods%2C%20Third%20Edition%20Applied%20Social%20Research%20Methods%20Series%2C%20Vol%205%20%282002%2029.pdf?forcedownload=1

Appendices

Appendix A. AVA Document Review Guide for Initial Programme Theory

1. What social problem does the Career Guidance Programme seek to address?
2. What is the expected goal of the Career Guidance Programme?
3. What are the Career Guidance Programme's expected objectives?
4. What resources are intended to be used in implementing the Career Guidance Programme activities?
5. What activities are planned to be implemented during the Career Guidance Programme?
6. What products and services (outputs) are expected to be generated from different activities of the Career Guidance Programme?
7. What processes and areas does the programme focus on to bring about the desired change?
8. What changes does the programme anticipate producing in the short-term, medium-term and long-term?
9. What assumptions underpin the Career Guidance Programme in general and the potential of outputs to translate into results?
 - What leads to which component of the programme? Activities to outputs; Outputs to short-term outcomes; short-term outcomes to medium-term outcomes?
 - What are the required necessary conditions for the linkages to take place?
10. What other expectations, if any, have been documented for the Career Guidance Programme that have not been covered above?

Appendix B. Workshop Agenda and Guiding Questions



This is the meeting agenda and guiding questions for developing the initial programme theory of AVA's Career Guidance Programme. This meeting seeks to develop a draft initial programme theory developed by AVA programme Officials. At the end of the meeting, the draft initial programme theory will be developed and further refined by the consultant.

Expected Time: 2 hours

Time	Task/Activities	Lead Person
5 Minutes	1. Greetings and Self introduction name, job title, length of service at AVA and to describe their role in AVA, the Life Matters intervention or the Career Guidance Programme.	All
5 Minutes	2. Welcome Remarks	AVA Executive Director
15 Minutes	3. Purpose of the Meeting and Presentation on Programme Theory Concepts and Example	Evaluator
5 Minutes	4. Clarifications on Programme Theory	AVA Participants*
30 Minutes	5. Constructing Individual Programme Theory of the Career Guidance Programme	AVA Participants
20	6. Sharing individual Programme Theory versions	AVA Participants
30	7. Constructing one/uniform version of the Programme Theory	AVA Participants
5 Minutes	8. Individual reflections and remarks	AVA Participants

5 Minutes	9. Close Remarks	Evaluator
-----------	------------------	-----------

*Executive Director and Director of Programmes plus any other person who participated in initial design of the programme.

Task 5 Guiding Questions (Developing the Programme Theory by each individual (Task 5))

1. What resources or inputs (financial and non-financial) are meant to be used by the Career Guidance Programme to carry out its actions?
2. What activities or actions is the Career Guidance Programme meant to carry out?
3. What services or products (outputs) is the Career Guidance Programme meant to produce from its activities and resources?
4. What is anticipated to happen to young people who engage in Career Guidance Programme in the short-term, medium-term and long-term?
5. What processes and areas is the Career Guidance Programme are you meant to focus on to bring about the desired change?
6. What kind of assumptions or conditions are meant to be in place for the programme to deliver its services and products, and changes?
7. What component is meant to lead to which component of the programme? Activities to outputs; Outputs to short-term outcomes; short-term outcomes to medium-term outcomes?
8. What other expectation, if any, did you have when starting the Career Guidance Programme which has not been covered in the above discussion issues?
9. What factors were anticipated to affect the programmes implementation?

Task 7 Guiding Questions (Reflection and Creation of one Initial/Anticipated Programme Theory of the Career Guidance Programme)

1. Tell me, how was the activity? What did you like during the exercise? What was challenging?
2. What are the similarities between the different versions of the programme? What is different?
3. Are the causal linkages well specified? What leads to what, going forward or backwards?
4. Are the different components well specified? What can be corrected or adjusted?
5. Are the assumptions and external factors well specified?
6. What adjustments can be made to have one programme theory diagram?

7. Do you have any comments or observations?

Appendix C. Procedure for Stakeholder Workshop for Development of Initial Programme Theory

Participants were welcomed to the workshop and requested to introduce themselves in terms of their designation, how long they have worked with Action Volunteers Africa and their role in the design and implementation of the Career Guidance Programme. After self-introductions, the evaluator stated the purpose and expected output from the workshop and proceeded to make a short presentation on programme theory. The presentation focused on the definition of the programme theory and its key elements, a description of key elements and an example of what a completed programme theory looks like. The presentation was mailed to participants a day before the workshop.

After the evaluator's presentation, two groups of two persons were formed and invited to construct the Career Guidance Programme theory as per initial expectations. Workshop participants were guided to create different elements of the programme theory such as inputs, activities, outputs, short-term outcomes; medium-term outcomes; long-term outcomes, key assumptions and external factors. Some guiding questions presented in Appendix B were used to facilitate individual reflections and construction of the programme theory. Guiding questions were electronically mailed to the participants before the workshop. Participants in each group wrote their ideas on idea cards and stick notes and then organised them on a table under the different themes that constitute a programme theory.

Group outputs/deliberations of the Career Guidance Programme theory were reviewed by all participants to identify similarities, differences and unique aspects. The different aspects which are common and unique were pulled together into one diagram/illustration of the Career Guidance Programme Theory. The aspects which do not concur were reviewed, validated and added to common elements. After combining all aspects and organising them under different components, represented the initial or illustrated programme theory which was adopted and subjected to further refinements after the workshop. AVA staff offered to draft and share the initial programme theory with the evaluator for further review and finalisation. The evaluator then requested participants to indicate (briefly) what they had learnt from the meeting, what was interesting or challenging before thanking participants and sharing the next steps for the evaluation.

Appendix D. Meeting Agenda and Guiding for Validation of Initial Programme Theory of the Career Guidance Programme



This is the meeting agenda and guiding questions for the validation meeting for the initial programme theory of AVA's Career Guidance Programme. This meeting seeks to solicit feedback and validate the initial programme theory developed by the evaluator. At the end of the meeting, the initial programme will be confirmed with or without adjustment and adopted for the plausibility check.

Expected Time: 60 Minutes

Proposed Agenda for Validation Meeting

Time	Activities	Lead Person
5 Minutes	Welcome Remarks	AVA Executive Director
15 Minutes	Purpose of the Meeting and Presentation of the Draft Initial Programme Theory of the Career Guidance Programme	Evaluator
20 Minutes	Discussion and Feedback/Observation on the Draft Initial Programme Theory	Director of Programmes
10 Minutes	Suggesting adjustments to the initial programme theory	Director of Programmes
5 Minutes	Adoption of the Initial Programme Theory of the Career Guidance Programme	Executive Director
5 Minutes	Close Remarks	Evaluator

Guiding Questions for Discussion of the Initial Programme Theory

1. Does the draft accurately portray the underlying logic/programme theory of AVA's Career Guidance Programme? If not, which aspects would you like to see adjusted?
2. Are the different components well specified? If not, where are extra words / adjustments needed to ensure the theory is clear and understandable?
3. Are the causal links and loops well specified? Are any changes necessary? And if so, between which pathways and components?
4. Are the assumptions and external factors well specified? What improvements can be made to reflect what the programme does and how it is expected to work?
5. What other changes are required?

Appendix E. Document Review Guide for Similar Career Guidance Interventions

1. What do other Career Guidance Programmes entail?
2. What activities do other Career Guidance Programmes undertake?
3. What outputs do they produce?
4. What are the short-term and medium-term outcomes of such programmes?
5. What are the key assumptions which are embedded in the design of such programmes?
6. What risks do Career Guidance Programmes face?
7. What factors enable Career Guidance Programmes to be successful?
8. What factors constrain the success of Career Guidance Programmes?

Appendix F. Document Review Guide for social science theory/principles of career guidance

1. What typical interventions and or activities exist for career guidance?
2. What are the psychological principles which inform the design of Career Guidance Programmes?
3. What are the key assumptions informing career guidance in general?
4. What are the known outcomes of Career Guidance Programmes?
5. Are there any existing generic casual pathways for Career Guidance Programmes?

Appendix G. Focus Group Discussion Guide for Programme Participants (Targeted Youth)



Dear Programme Participant

My name is Robert Waswaga. I am a Masters Student at the University of Cape Town pursuing a degree in Programme Evaluation. I am conducting a theory evaluation of the Career Guidance Programme of Action Volunteers Africa with a focus on the Life Matters Programme. My research aims to critique the design and overall feasibility of AVA's career guidance approach and activities in addressing youth unemployment.

I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group discussion because you are a beneficiary. The discussion aims at soliciting feedback on how the programme works. The research has been approved by Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee. The research shall abide by all ethical principles and procedures issued by the University of Cape Town.

The focus group discussion will be approximately 1 hour long and will be conducted in-person or via a suitable online platform (depending on the Covid-19 circumstances). The workshop will be recorded, so that I can re-listen to the conversations while I begin to develop the Career Guidance Programme's theory diagram. There is no compensation for participation in this research.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point without negative consequences. There are no foreseeable factors that may cause potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects to you.

While there are no direct incentives for participation, it is hoped that this evaluation will contribute to improving the design and delivery of AVA's Career Guidance Programme

11. For new young people seeking to join the Life Matters Programme, what advice would you give them if they are to benefit from Career Guidance Programme?
12. Do you have any other comment or issue you would like to raise which has not been discussed so far? If yes, what are these issues?

Thank you for your time and feedback on the Career Guidance Programme!

Appendix H. Interview Schedule for AVA Implementers and Staff



Dear AVA Staff,

My name is Robert Waswaga. I am a Masters Student at the University of Cape Town pursuing a degree in Programme Evaluation. I am conducting a theory evaluation of the Career Guidance Programme of Action Volunteers Africa with a focus on the Life Matters Programme. My research aims to critique the design and overall feasibility of AVA's career guidance approach and activities in addressing youth unemployment.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview because you are programme staff. The interview aims at soliciting feedback on how the programme works. The research has been approved by Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee. The research shall abide by all ethical principles and procedures issued by the University of Cape Town.

The interview will be approximately 1.5 hour long and will be conducted in-person or via a suitable online platform (depending on the Covid-19 circumstances). The workshop will be recorded, so that I can re-listen to the conversations while I begin to develop the Career Guidance Programme's theory diagram. There is no compensation for participation in this research.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point without negative consequences. There are no foreseeable factors that may cause potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects to you.

While there are no direct incentives for participation, it is hoped that this evaluation will contribute to improving the design and delivery of AVA's Career Guidance Programme

If you consent to participate in the evaluation, please sign in the consent section provided below.

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I am a willing participant and was provided with the opportunity to ask any questions:

Participant Full name	Date	Signature
-----------------------	------	-----------

Thank you for your time and let us commence the discussion (If yes) or end the process (if no)

1. Let us go around the room and introduce ourselves. The introduction can cover your name, highest level of education and what you do for a living
2. Tell me about your role in the AVA's Life Matters Programme?
3. Tell me about the career guidance sessions/activities which you carried out as part of the Life matters programme? What does it entail?
4. If any, do you find Career Guidance Programmes useful? What particular activities were very useful? What could be the reasons as to why such activities were useful?
5. If any, were some activities less useful? If yes, which activities and what made them less useful?
6. What, if any, are the things which have worked well for Career Guidance Programme? What has made such things to work well?
7. How about things which did not work well? What has prevented such things from working well?
8. What motivates youth to continue with the programme? What makes youth drop out of the programme?
9. What are some of the things which enable youth to make proper use of the Career Guidance Programme? What of the things which limited the extent to which the Career Guidance Programme was beneficial to targeted youth?
10. What, if any, are the things which influence whether the Career Guidance Programme works out well or not in addressing the youth unemployment challenge in South Africa?
11. Do you have any other comment or issue you would like to raise which has not been discussed so far? If yes, what are these issues?
12. Thank you for your time and feedback on the Career Guidance Programme!

Appendix I. Synthesis Guiding Questions

1. What are the similarities between the initial programme theory and programme theory from review of literature of similar interventions?
2. How do the underlying assumptions for the initial programme theory compare to social science principles and standards for career guidance?
3. How does the actual theory of the Career Guidance Programme as per stakeholder feedback compare with the initial programme theory?
4. What are the similarities and differences/gaps? What are the areas which need adjustment to have a sound programme theory? What broad actions are required to improve the design and implement the Career Guidance Programme?
5. What areas can be maintained, improved, added or removed in the context of the above findings?

Appendix J. Introduction and Consent Letter



Dear AVA Stakeholder

My name is Robert Waswaga. I am a Masters Student at the University of Cape Town pursuing a degree in Programme Evaluation. I am conducting a theory evaluation of the Career Guidance Programme of Action Volunteers Africa with a focus on the Life Matters Programme. My research aims to critique the design and overall feasibility of AVA's career guidance approach and activities in addressing youth unemployment.

I would like to invite you to participate in a workshop because you played a key role in the programme as a beneficiary, designer, an implementer, or donor. The workshop aims to understand how you think the programme is meant to work to achieve its outcomes. The research has been approved by Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee. The research shall abide by all ethical principles and procedures issued by the University of Cape Town.

The workshop will be approximately 2 hours long and will be conducted in-person or via a suitable online platform (depending on the Covid-19 circumstances). The workshop will be recorded, so that I can relisten to the conversations while I begin to develop the Career Guidance Programme's theory diagram. There is no compensation for participation in this research.

Following the workshop, I will ask all those involved to make themselves available for a 1-hour follow up meeting where we will discuss the programme theory created.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point without negative consequences. There are no foreseeable factors that may cause potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects to you.

Appendix K: Data Management Plan

Hardware and software requirements

Stakeholder engagements, key informant interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted via Zoom. All recording will be kept on zoom cloud server and downloaded to the student's laptop for transcriptions and future reference. The recordings will be kept and destroyed after acceptance of the final research report by UCT examiners and award of marks to the student.

Qualitative data shall be typeset in Microsoft Word document file formats and kept in separate files. A pencil and paper based analysis will be adopted to support analysis of the data in line with research questions. Participants will be assigned numbers with gender allocation such as R1F (First Respondent, female). Where respondents are gender neutral, they will be classified as R1N.

Required technical abilities

The evaluator will only need skills on use and designing the survey questionnaire in using prestik application and facilitating meetings via zoom. There is sufficient technical abilities in analysing qualitative data using free format and data analysis packages such as Nvivo and SPSS.

Ethics:

All participants in different data collection activities will be provided with information on how the information is to be used. Their permission will be requested to record proceedings, transcription and use of any direct quotes during report writing while keeping their identity anonymous. All secondary sources will be referenced in line with American Psychological Association Seventh Edition referencing style.

Data Collected	Data Entry	Data Analysis	Format of Presentation	Training
Gender	Data shall be transcribed in Microsoft word format as per questions and nature of participant	Gender composition will be presented in percentages	Description of gender composition	The researcher was familiar with pen and paper approach to qualitative data analysis

Age	Same as above	Age will be presented in average or mean age and age groups	Description of gender composition	The researcher was familiar with pen and paper approach to qualitative data analysis
Education Qualification	Same as above	Education level will be presented in percentages by level of education	Tables or Figures on highest education qualification of participants	The researcher was familiar with pen and paper approach to qualitative data analysis
Participation in programme activities	Same as above	Qualitative characterisation of experiences of participation in different programme activities	Themes and groundedness and references	The researcher was familiar with pen and paper approach to qualitative data analysis
Feedback on usefulness of the programme in general and specific elements	Same as above	Qualitative characterisation of the programme	Presentation of themes and groundedness	The researcher was familiar with pen and paper approach to qualitative data analysis
Qualitative information on programme usefulness, what works, what doesn't work, influencing factors etc.	Same as above	Thematic analysis of emerging feedback on different usefulness, what works, what doesn't work, influencing factors etc.	Presentation of themes, groundedness (number of courses and references to each theme) and anonymised selected direct quotations	The researcher was familiar with pen and paper approach to qualitative data analysis
Results of the programme	Same as above	Thematic analysis of results of the programme in the short and medium-term	Themes and groundedness on programme results	The researcher was familiar with pen and paper approach to qualitative data analysis