

# **Bergzicht Training: A Formative Evaluation**

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## 1. Introduction and Background

In 2014 Soreaso Research Associates were commissioned to execute a formative evaluation of Bergzicht Training. At that stage, this Stellenbosch based Non Profit Organisation (NPO) had celebrated 20 years in existence. The overall goal of that evaluation was to determine what the training needs at that stage were. This was done by exploring expectations and preferences of those businesses and establishments that employed Bergzicht Training graduates, the expectations that students had regarding programme content, and lastly, expectations of and attitudes towards Bergzicht Training held by donors of this NPO.

Bergzicht Training is located in Stellenbosch, a semi urban town that boasts with a highly diversified and rapidly expanding economy. Apart from its agri –economy that historically formed the backbone of its economy, there has been a rapid and remarkable development in especially the financial, information technology and tourism sectors. However, this picturesque and elegant town also is confronted by a bulging demographic and socio economic underbelly characterized by poverty and marginalization, amongst other caused and sustained by a pervasive lack of requisite educational and training levels to gainfully participate in and benefit from this dynamic and diversified local economy. Given the current internal migration population dynamics in the Western Cape, Stellenbosch will experience a sustained increase of un- and semi-skilled young migrants settling in this town seeking employment opportunities. Given the sophisticated and demanding nature of many of the expanding financial and economic sectors of Stellenbosch, precious few of these new migrants will participate in the local economy, thereby increasing joblessness.

Against this background, it is patently clear that the mission of Bergzicht Training is becoming increasingly relevant, and of strategic importance within the prevailing socio economic scenario it find itself in, i.e. *“to empower unemployed and/or semi-skilled people with accredited, innovative and affordable learning opportunities, to empower them to start their own business or to secure living-wage employment for them through an in-house employment bureau”*.

Four years had lapsed since the first evaluation and the Board and Management of Bergzicht Training felt it to be opportune to now repeat this initiative. It is of strategic importance that any organization periodically reflects critically on its underlying philosophy and stated focus that guide the appropriateness of programmes, as well as on the quality of its programmes and activities as perceived by stakeholders.

Therefore, this second research initiative did, to some extent, investigated and explored similar issues and topics as the first one, that is, to confirm that the focus of the training protocol is still

relevant and effective and meet the needs and expectations of the students and other stakeholders of Bergzicht in a rapidly changing institutional ecology.

However, apart from this, the current evaluation did explore additional issues that were illuminated in exploratory discussions with the management team of Bergzicht Training. These include a recent trend that seems to suggest that there is a decline in interest in following the training programmes offered by Bergzicht, as well as feedback received from employers that some students lack discipline, resilience and tenacity, resulting in them either terminating their work or their contract not being renewed. In order to arrive at a some comprehension of these trends in - depth and lengthy interviews were conducted with strategically positioned and actively involved leaders from two communities Bergzicht draws its students from, with the expectation that these discussions might assist in understanding better these trends.

An additional need expressed by Bergzicht Management was to establish the post - training career paths of students that have successfully exited this organization. To explore this phenomenon, the research design included for the first time, a substantial sample of ex – students.

## **2. Goal and Objectives of the Research**

The overall goal of this research exercise was to determine the quality and relevance of training programmes offered by Bergzicht as well as the sustained impact thereof on the professional life of its ex – students.

Flowing from this the more detailed objectives was to determine:

- expectations, preferences and assessment of *employers* of Bergzicht Training graduates,
- opinions and expectations of students regarding programme content and outcomes,
- professional path travelled by ex students
- expectations and attitudes prevailing within the donor community

### **3. Research Methodology**

A quantitative - qualitative design was used to collect the requisite information from the respective stakeholders. The quantitative research design was employed to gather information from the ex – students of Bergzicht in order to determine if any statistical trends in the responses were evident. Telephonic Interviews were conducted using a semi - structured questionnaire to collect the information.

The qualitative approach is typically used in studies when in - depth analysis, nuanced and thick descriptions of phenomena are sought. It allows for an insider perspective of respondents’ social behaviour, attitudes, underlying motivations and opinions, thus allowing for an accurate, rich and comprehensive understanding of behaviour and responses. The orthodox methodological techniques were used when employing a qualitative research design, i.e. in - depth interviews and focus group discussions to gather the required information. In two instances questionnaires were mailed to respondents.

### **4. Source of information**

Respondents for in-depth interviews were purposefully selected, based on their expertise and/or association with Bergzicht Training. The selection of participants was informed by the defined focus areas of the research and included the following broad categories; employers of Bergzicht graduates, the institutions where students undergo their practical periods, both current and past students of Bergzicht, representatives of the donor community, and community leaders (Table 1).

All students that completed their studies for the period 2015 to 2017 were contacted via telephone and requested to partake in a telephonic interview. The fieldwork team was able to successfully complete 82 interviews which relates to a 45% response rate, an acceptable rate in the social sciences.

From consistency in the responses elicited from the different sources it became evident that the sample used was sufficient to establish data saturation. This is a good indication of the validity and reliability of the data and information generated in this study.

The tables below reflect the range and number of respondents included in the respective research designs

**Table 1: Sample of Stakeholders**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>	<b>Number of focus groups</b>
Hospitality	6	
Frail Care	5	
ECD	5	
Community leaders	2	
Tutors	2	
Students current		2
Students past	82	

*Employers and institutions used to place students for practical sessions*

A number of in - depth interviews were conducted with carefully and purposefully selected stakeholders. These included representatives of organized commerce that correspond with fields covered in the Bergzicht training programmes (e.g. Hospitality Industry, ECD, Frail Care).

*Current Students*

Focus group sessions were conducted with current students of Bergzicht. Students were interviewed following the full spectrum of programmes on offer. The main aim of collecting information from these groups was to ascertain to what extent the current offering of training programmes meet their expectations and the requirements of their working environment by ascertaining strength and weaknesses of existing programmes as well as the possible need for new or advanced training programmes.

*Past students*

Structured telephonic interviews were conducted with students that completed their training at Bergzicht in the period 2015 to 2017. The objective of these interviews was to determine the employment status of students, in what sector they were employed and how the demands set by the respective sectors matched with the training programme they followed; in addition, if the training programme they completed prepared them sufficiently for the working environment and demands, why students are not working in their field of training, and how they experienced the time at Bergzicht during their training.

### *Community Leaders*

In order to develop a better understanding of the impact that the typical domestic and socio economic environment that the majority of students enrolling at Bergzicht originates from has on their personality, confidence and sense of self worth, interviews were conducted with community leaders from two communities that many of these students grew up in<sup>1</sup>.

### *Donors*

A sample of current donors was individually interviewed. Two donors responded by email. Issues dealt with included donors' perception and evaluation of appropriateness and relevance of programmes offered considering the national and local market requirements and needs, as well as possible developments in the market that need new training programme initiatives. The commitment of donors continuing their funding or support of Bergzicht Training, was also tested.

## **4.1 Telephonic interviews**

Student lists of the past three years (2015, 2016, 2017) were provided to the research team by Bergzicht Training. Professional fieldwork staff phoned all the students on these lists and if the student was available and willing, a short telephonic interview was conducted. In the event that a student was not available or did not answer the call, fieldworkers would retry to make contact up to five times to ensure that all students were given a fair chance to participate in the study. If still unsuccessful, the particular student would be marked as not available.

In instances where students were not available reasons were:

1. Phones were switched off
2. No answer
3. Wrong number
4. Number does not exist

Finally the fieldwork team completed 82 interviews of 180 students (45% response rate). As can be expected the response rates were higher for those student groups that were enrolled at Bergzicht more recently, with the success rate decreasing dramatically for the earlier groups (table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Two spokespeople from other relevant communities were also contacted. The one did not honour the appointment while the other could not be contacted

**Table 1: Response rates for respective study years**

<b>Study year</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>2017</b>	60%	36/60
<b>2016</b>	51%	31/60
<b>2015</b>	25%	15/60

## **5. Discussion of Findings**

The following paragraphs contain an analysis and discussion of both the quantitative telephonic survey and the in – depth interviews conducted with different stakeholders. The first analysis pertains to the individual and employment profile of past students of Bergzicht. This is followed by a discussion of interviews conducted with spokespeople of establishments where students of Bergzicht did their practical training. The analyses and discussions will be presented according to the different training programme followed by students, i.e. Hospitality, Frail Care and Edu Care. This will be followed by an analysis and discussion of in – depth interviews conducted with donors as well as responses received by e-mail, followed by that of the two community spokespeople.

### **5.1 Individual and employment profile of past students of Bergzicht (2015-2017)**

Since 2017 Bergzicht has trained 180 students, that is, 60 students annually dispersed equally over the three training programmes (Cater care/Professional Cooking, Edu Care and Frail Care). Students are mostly young females, with male students primarily enrolling for the Cater Care/Professional Cooking training programme (table 2). The age of students varies from 19 to 45 years with 24 years the mean of age students enrolled in the Cater Care programme, 25 years the mean age of students within the Edu Care programme and 26 years for Frail Care students (table 3).



**Table 2: Gender distribution and learning programme**

			Learning Programme			Total
			Cater care/ Prof Cooking	Edu Care	Frail Care	
Gender	Female	Count	39	60	59	158
		Column %	65.0%	100.0%	98.3%	87.8%
	Male	Count	21	0	1	22
		Column %	35.0%	0.0%	1.7%	12.2%
	Total	Count	60	60	60	180
		Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 3: Age distribution of students and learning programme**

	Mean age	Lowest Age	Highest Age
<b>Cater Care/ Professional cooking</b>	24	19	35
<b>Edu Care</b>	25	19	43
<b>Frail Care</b>	26	19	45

Considering the employment status of students, 40% indicated that they do work in the field they were trained, 10% are employed in another field and 35% are unemployed and seeking an employment opportunity. If the employment status of students who are either employed or looking for work is considered for the respective study years, the majority of students of both 2015 and 2017 are working in the field they have studied. The 2016 group is the exception, with an equal proportion of student that are either working in their field of study or who are looking for employment (39%). The 2016 intake also represents the highest portion of students who are working in a field other than what they studied at Bergzicht. The highest portion of work seekers are, however, found in the 2017 study group with unemployment among students shown to have increased since 2015 (table 4).

**Table 4: Employment status of students either employed or looking for employment**

			Year qualified			Total
			2015	2016	2017	
Employment status	Work in field of training	Count	6	11	15	32
		Column %	54.5%	39.3%	51.7%	47.1%
	Work in other field than field of training	Count	2	6	0	8
		Column %	18.2%	21.4%	0.0%	11.8%
	Looking for work	Count	3	11	14	28
		Column %	27.3%	39.3%	48.3%	41.2%
Total	Count	11	28	29	68	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Of those students that were not employed and not actively looking for employment at the time of the telephonic interviews (N=13), eight indicated that they were not currently working as they are caring for their babies. Two students indicated that they were presently unemployed since they have commenced pursuing further studies and in the process of finalising these.

Testing the applicability of the learning material of the three respective training programmes, students employed in their field of study at the time of the telephonic interviews were asked to reflect on how well the learning programme followed at Bergzicht prepared them for their current work environment. The overwhelming majority (91%) responded positively, stating that the training helped them significantly and prepared them sufficiently for their current working environment. To quote a few comments made by the respondents:

*“Alles wat ons daar geleer het gebruik ek in die werk wat ek nou doen. Ek kan nie dink aan iets wat kan verbeter nie”.*

*“Daar is niks wat ons met die pasiënte moet doen wat ons nie geleer het in die kursus nie”.*

*“Die Edu Care kursus is baie volledig. Dink nie daar is tekortkominge nie”.*

*“Die kursus het baie gehelp. Ek het baie geleer en werk nou saam met ‘n sjef. Dis baie lekker want sy leer my nog baie.”*

*“Ek het baie geleer, en die programme het my baie goed voorberei vir die werk. Ek was baie teruggetrokke toe ek daar begin (het) en hulle het my gehelp om oor dit te kom.”*

Of the students (N=3) who indicated that the training only prepared them to some degree for their current work environment, the following reasons were given:

*“Dis n goeie kursus, maar ek sou graag meer wou leer van confectionary.”*

*“Ek sou graag meer praktiese opleiding wou hê en ook hoe om die kliënte te hanteer. Ek werk tans as waitress en in die kombuis.”*

*“Het so 80% gehelp. Ek werk by St Josephs met kinders met HIV en diabetes en ons is nie geleer om mense met sulke siektes te hanteer (nie). Die kursus moet dus n bietjie dieper gaan.”*

As a final question, all past students were asked to describe their general experience of their training at Bergzicht. Again the question was answered overwhelmingly positive, with 96% depicts it as a positive experience. 4% (N=3) had some mixed feelings. To quote some of the remarks by students who described their experience as positive:

*“Van die studente tot die onderwysers was alles perfek. Ons was almal n ‘tight knit’ familie en ek sou niks verander nie.”*

*“Onderwysers is baie behulpsaam. Die ander studente het nie neergekyk op ons wat in Bergzicht bly. Ek dink die Edu Care kursus is uitstekend.”*

*“My ervaring was baie goed. Dit het van my n beter mens gemaak.”*

*“It was really nice at the college. I loved it so much. I haven’t got any complaints.”*

*“Ek was dolgelukkig daar. Ek was eers twee jaar by die huis en kon nie werk kry nie. Toe doen ek die kursus en kry dadelik werk.”*

Interestingly, all the students that expressed mixed feelings regarding their training at Bergzicht were Edu Care students. The crux of their concerns related to the fact that the Edu Care training programme is not accredited and although it does not lack in quality compared to other training programmes, this limitation works seriously to their disadvantage when applying for employment. In the words of the students:

*“Ek was baie gelukkig by Bergzicht college. Die opleiding was ook meer gevorderd as die van die onderwyseresse by Boland College wat saam met my werk. Ek het egter aansoek gedoen om ‘n diploma te studeer by Boland, want die kursus by Bergzicht word nie erken (nie). Ek is baie ongelukkig hieroor.”*

*“Ek was baie gelukkig by die college maar ek voel ons studente het ‘n wanpersepsie gekry van die Edu Care kursus. Ek weet en doen meer as die juffrou, maar omdat ons kwalifikasie nie geakkrediteer is nie, word dit nie erken nie en mag ek nie ‘n goeie salaris kry nie. Ek voel dis baie onregverdig en die college moet iets daaraan doen.”*

*“Ons kursus was baie volledig. Ek het dit vergelyk met Boston en Boland college se kursusse en ons het selfs meer vakke as hulle gedoen. Dit is egter baie onregverdig dat ons kursus as n vlak 2 en hulle sn as vlak 4 beskou word. Daarom wil UNISA my nie as student aanvaar nie. Ek het Bergzicht*

*gekontak en hulle het gesê as ons 2 of 3 dae inkom, sal hulle ons n akkreditasie nommer gee, maar hulle het ons nog nooit gekontak nie. Ek voel baie teleurgesteld, want nou het ek eintlik 'n jaar gemors."*

## **5.2 Hospitality**

The hospitality industry (including This is particularly the case of Stellenbosch and the surrounding destinations that offer unique and diversified tourism opportunities and experiences of a high quality and standard. the tourism sector) is rapidly growing in South Africa since the dawn of democracy in South Africa. The escalation of agri- tourism has been of particularly importance in this regard. This implies that for the foreseeable future gainful employment will be available in this sector, albeit for applicants with the requisite and appropriate and diversified skill sets.

A total of six interviews were conducted with representatives of this sector. A questionnaire schedule was used. Different types of businesses were included in the sample, e.g. exclusive restaurants and lodges, wine tasting rooms and providers of student meals.

Similar to the trend established with the first evaluation of Bergzicht, the overall the assessment of Bergzicht students varied considerably. One employer, a provider of student meals on a large scale, indicated that when vacancies occur, they tend to give preference to Bergzicht students since they are trained in the basic skills required in catering. An important aspect in this regard is that it saves them time. They also assume that these students are motivated and are less likely to drop – out, an aspect that is highly valued in an industry that is characterized by high staff turnover, something the spokesperson described as *"a huge and costly problem in the food service industry . . . we argue that Bergzicht students will be more motivated to stuck it out"*.

A second employer, representing one of the most significant players in the agri - tourism sector of Stellenbosch, indicated their policy is to recruit employees from Stellenbosch. This forms part of their general youth empowerment approach. They do not give preference to any training establishment in this regard though. Another respondent, also from the agri – tourism sector, approaches Bergzicht first as the default position, mainly because *"we are aware of them, their training programme covers required and relevant aspects that are required by us and that their training programmes are good"*. She did, however, point out the one trainee from Bergzicht lasted only one week. This was because she could not deal with the front - of – house situation. She did not have the appropriate personality. *"she was excellent in the kitchen though, but we needed her in a*

*different capacity*". This was a disappointing experience as she claimed that she was specific and detailed in her requirements regarding her requirements when she approached Bergzicht.

Another respondent, representing a farm based conference, restaurant and tasting room establishment from Franschhoek stated accepting trainees from Bergzicht forms part of their broader training culture, *"we are very focused on the empowerment of especially the local marginally youth – we are serious about addressing the multitude of social ills in our surrounding communities through sustained socio economic empowerment"*. A spokesman for a restaurant in the same area simply mentioned that they have no problem in accepting trainees from Bergzicht, or appointing them as permanent employees because they have the required basic skills and are *"very keen to work and learn"*. A respondent representing the production and distribution of food products of a superior quality to five star establishments in the Western Cape, who presently has one permanent ex - Bergzicht employee, (that he described as one of the best in his position), indicated he opts for Bergzicht trained applicants as *"the students have a certain skill set and know how to do the job – you don't have to start from scratch"*.

The General Manager of an up - market hotel in Stellenbosch indicated that it is standard procedure to inform Bergzicht when vacancies are available. He however, stressed that, although the acquisition of the basic relevant theoretical knowledge and skills are important, it is significantly more imperative that students need to display the appropriate personality, attitude and overall inclination suitable for this industry, *"Min mense blyk te verstaan wat die ure is in hospitality – werk baie lang en laat ure. Hospitality is 'n manier van lewe. As jy in hospitality wil ingaan moet jy gebou wees daarvoor. As jy 'n 8-5 job wil hê, gaan dit nie vir jou werk nie"*.

The strategic importance of this aspect, i.e. the correct type of person able and willing to adapt to the unique and mostly challenging demands set by the hospitality industry, was repeatedly stressed by respondents. It was also mentioned in this regard that Bergzicht must ensure that aspirant students in the hospitality training programme display the appropriate disposition. A number of respondents stated that the initial interview with aspirant employees is critical in order to establish the suitability of candidates. It was mentioned that although prior training is important, a strong set of core personal and soft skills are of paramount importance in order to function in this sector. These include adaptability, resilience and tenacity. In the same vein, another spokesperson declared, *"the most important and valuable contribution Bergzicht can make to students earmarked for the hospitality industry, is to instil a 'I can' mentality and inclination. He or she needs this characteristic"*. Another respondent stated that *" what I look for is self confidence, how the applicant carries herself during interview, her body language is important during the interview, her communication and*

*interaction skills are vital, I look at the level of nervousness of the applicant. I look for human and common sense skills, because these are crucial in this industry, that is, why the interview is very important”.*

### **5.2.a Satisfaction with Work Performance of Bergzicht Trainees and Employees**

The relative level of satisfaction of employers with the general and overall work performance of Bergzicht trainees and employees are of paramount importance to Bergzicht, as it directly speaks to the measure it succeeds in producing the multitude of skills required by this industry.

The majority of both trainees and those that have been employed by the businesses interviewed in this sector are in so - called entry level positions, i.e. cleaners, housekeepers, kitchen staff performing rudimentary tasks like peeling vegetables, but also in more advanced positions like waiters and ordering clerks.

Respondents differed regarding the skills and knowledge levels of Bergzicht trainees and employees. Two respondents were extremely happy with this describing it as *“excellent”* and *“very satisfactorily”* respectively, while another thought it to be slightly above average. In three instances respondents declared that they were satisfied with the trainee’s performance in the kitchen, but once they were put in a front – of – house situation, where they were expected to interact with the public, they lacked the necessary skills (e.g. confident interaction with clients, effective conversational English). One of these respondents stated, *“there is a general lack of confidence amongst them, they are afraid they will make a mistake. The training programme must look at exposing students to the realities of the hospitality industry”*. A General Manager described the skills level of the trainee as *“relatively unpolished, but that did not worry me because she was very willing to learn and had a hunger to develop herself which is more important than the skills she brought from Bergzicht. Her attitude was positive, skills development will be part of in- service training here”*.

A follow – up question probed students’ ability to be innovative and “think out of the box”. One described this as “quite good”, while one thought it not to be too high. The remaining respondents indicated they were not sure and in a position to comment on this due to the brevity of the practical period.

As far as the ability of Bergzicht trainees to interact with fellow workers and successfully work in a team context is concerned, respondents varied considerably in their opinion, ranging from not being able to at all to fair and *“she fitted in seamlessly and was an asset to the workforce”*. Another

respondent described it as *“very well, he takes leadership responsibility and also assists new recruits”*. Another respondent stated that she had a bad experience with the Bergzicht trained employee. She was a destabilizing influence and eventually was subjected to a disciplinary hearing. One respondent identified this aspect as a glaring shortcoming and strongly suggested more attention be allotted to the development of core human or soft skills. One respondent pointed out that this aspect largely depends on the individual trainee’s personality and to a lesser extent on training.

Respondents’ perception regarding work ethic (relating to for example punctuality and efficiency) displayed by Bergzicht trainees and workers also differed markedly. The spokesperson for a company providing meals to students described this aspect as extremely bad, adding that the one employee is constantly late, while the other is sometimes absent without any clear explanation. A spokesperson for a large wine farm stated that initially the performance of the employee was very good, being punctual and a diligent worker; however, gradually her commitment deteriorated – mainly due to personal issues and problems. Her relationship with fellow employees also worsened gradually.

A spokesperson for another wine farm described the work ethic of the trainee as marginally acceptable, often lacking the requisite level of commitment and eagerness, adding that often the trainee was slightly late. Another spokesperson thought the overall work ethic was acceptable but the real test will be during the high season when the pressure is *“ongemaklik hoog”*, while a restaurant manager declared that *“hulle bly net weg”* He did add though that reliable transport to the restaurant (situated outside Stellenbosch) sometimes poses challenges which could partially explain this.

Two respondents both mentioned the onset of a drinking problem of their male employees trained at Bergzicht as a serious issue. The one was described as an excellent worker with distinct leadership potential, but was eventually dismissed due to a deterioration of behaviour. However, the same respondent who had to dismiss the employee was highly impressed with the trainees he accepted, stating that *“Bergzicht mense is redelik punctional. Ek was baie beïndruk met die student wat laaste hier prakties gedoen het. Sy is baie netjies, het goed ingepas met die ander en is baie vriendelik. Sy kon ook al basiese goed doen soos eiers bak ens. Dis ‘n klein hotel met ‘n klein kombuis, beteken personeel hier moet enige plek kan inval. Die feit dat sy in die kombuis kon funksioneer was baie goed”*.

The responses of the spokespeople for the different hospitality establishments interviewed regarding the comparative competence between Bergzicht trained employees and other workers, varied, with some declaring that the Bergzicht trained are definitely better, others thought there were no difference, while one stated that her trainees were initially exceptional and much better in the work they delivered, but gradually got very bad at their work. This, she attributed to a toxic work environment to some extent. One respondent said she was not in a position to answer due to the fact that the trainee only lasted a couple of days.

Based on their experience, respondents were asked to identify noticeable (if any) strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the training programme offered by Bergzicht. Of those that responded to this question the following sentiments were shared:

### *Strengths*

There was general satisfaction expressed that students were exposed and received a solid basic training and possess the necessary rudimentary and essential practical abilities to perform a certain scope of work in the hospitality industry. From the responses there appears to be at the onset of their employment an eagerness to develop themselves and learn additional skills; in addition, they radiate positivity. Compared to employees that did not follow the Bergzicht training programme a number of respondents stated that Bergzicht students are much faster at the uptake of new and challenging skills. One spokesperson also mentioned that her experience of these trainees are that they are well spoken, well presented and willing to take instructions, the latter she described as of high importance.

### *Weaknesses*

One weakness mentioned (referred to earlier in the report) by more than one spokesperson is the apparent deterioration of outstanding initial work performance and a tendency to embrace a norm of mediocrity in the workplace, performing their tasks without enthusiasm at a pedestrian pace. One respondent thought that trainees are vulnerable to a toxic or negative group dynamic, and that Bergzicht must spend more attention in equipping trainees to effectively resist this. Another shortcoming identified by two respondents is a reluctance to work shifts, a basic requirement that comes with the hospitality industry.

An issue repeatedly mentioned by virtually all spokespeople is the lack of core or soft skills amongst the Bergzicht trainees. One respondent put it down to trainees having a too limited scope of competencies given the contextual diverseness of the hospitality industry, by nature a multifaceted



sector, that requires a diverse skills set. He attributes this to inadequate exposure to the real industry and gaps in their training relating to the multitude of requirements of the industry. This sentiment was echoed by another respondent that suggested that Bergzicht students need to be *“up-skilled in order to adapt to real life situation of this sector”*. He stated that the more mature students appear to have more confidence in successfully dealing with new demands and venturing uncharted territory.

### **5.2.b Relevance of Existing Bergzicht Training programme and Need for New Skills Development**

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the appropriateness and relevance of the basic skills being instilled by Bergzicht through the hospitality training programme, describing it for example as excellent, good and acceptable. One respondent specializing in the provision of meals on a large scale stated, *“we are very satisfied with the scope and quality of the basic training done by Bergzicht they cannot do comprehensive training. They (employees) get additional job – specific training by us”*.

One respondent had mixed feelings. She was very satisfied with the level of skills displayed in one situation, that is, a clear indication of good tuition, but sorely lacked soft or people skills. She stressed that the hospitality sector demands multi skills (respondent added that she could have been unfortunate with the choice of the student). Another spokesperson also stressed the need for more comprehensive training in or of soft skills that he described as presently not adequate. He thought that a general up-skilling in the hospitality training programme is required that will open doors to other and better paying employment opportunities. Example cited were supervisor and leadership training programmes that will produce people that knows how to lead and manage people within an organization. He also mentioned that all students must be given the opportunity to acquire a drivers licence, as this will markedly increase their prospect of being employed or starting their own micro business

A spokesperson for a large scale wine farm and hospitality establishment stressed the strong need to include in *all* training programme offered a strong grounding in entrepreneurship Students need to be sensitized trainees *“in the business of a business”* and get a good grasp of issues around the profitability in a business venture - the positive utilization of social media is playing an increasing pivotal role in this regard and students should be introduced to these dimensions. In this regard it

was mentioned that this will facilitate and cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit in students; it was argued that Bergzicht should consider making a paradigm shift in this regard, that, additional to training the youth largely for employment, the youth are also empowered to become entrepreneurs.

Following the same theme, a general manager of a boutique hotel was of opinion that, *“oor die algemeen is die studente goed opgelei, maar daar is ‘n behoefte aan meer tegnologies opleiding soos bv. die gebruik van besprekingstelsels wat standard procedure is die hospitaliteit industrie (OPERA) – hulle kan ‘n dummy programme laai vir opleiding en oefen. Studente moet point of sale tegnologie ken – touch screen”*. This sentiment was supported by another spokesperson who expressed the need for students to receive a good grounding in Information Technology (IT), as well as in basic accounting procedures and understanding the formula of how to cost beverages and food.

A number of additional skill sets to include in the hospitality curriculum to be considered by Bergzicht include the training of high quality sommeliers and baristas, (mentioned by three spokespeople) described as highly sought after as these skills are presently in short supply. Another suggestion made was that Bergzicht should consider identifying students with the necessary artistic aptitude and give them additional training in food presentation – presently there exists a acute shortage of this and is regularly needed when catering for VIP functions.

### **5.2.c A Fresh Look at the Structure and Duration of the Programme**

An occurring theme touched on by the majority of respondents concerns the duration and structuring of the present training programme. These aspects were regularly referred to when discussing shortcomings, gaps and weaknesses with regards to both the content of the present training programme, but also when referring to the work performance of the trainees and those already employed.

Most of the spokespeople stressed the multi-faceted nature of the hospitality industry. It was pointed out that this aspect demands a multitude of both technical as well as human skills and competencies. The pervasive lack of core human competencies or also referred to as core or so - called soft skills of trainees, was a reoccurring theme that respondents associated closely, albeit not exclusively, with a shortcoming in the training programme. They attributed this lack to not enough attention been given during training, to the holistic development of the person, e.g. building and instilling confidence and the development of a solid self esteem, improvement of good language and communication proficiency (especially conversational English), as well as the nurturing of qualities

like eagerness, resilience and tenacity. It was pointed out these attributes are essential and a prerequisite to possess in the hospitality industry in general, but particularly so when employees (and trainees) are expected to work with clients (often international) in a front – of – house environment. These qualities, it was stressed are as important, if not more, than those applicable in cleaning and kitchen related work.

In order to address these shortcomings, it mooted that Bergzicht should critically interrogate its practical work or sessions protocol. The sentiment was voiced that currently, the practical is far too short and subsequently devoid from the realities of the multi - faceted hospitality industry. One strategy to address this, is to employ role playing to create real life scenarios where students are forced to, apart from performing a multitude of practical tasks, also have to interact with “*clients or customers*”. Through this simulation of a variety of real life situations and different scenarios students need be exposed to e.g. a tasting room environment– however, it was stressed that this also applies to kitchen staff, where good people and interactive skills are very important, as they are not only doing food preparation and cleaning. As example of the mastering of a multitude of skills, she mentioned the need for Bergzicht students to get reasonable acquainted with different wine cultivars and, crucially, receive dedicated waitress/waiter training, something that is strategically important in Stellenbosch and the broader Winelands environs, that boast with a multitude of eateries and tasting rooms

In the same vein two other spokespeople suggested that these real life situations be simulated as part of the training programme work through the staging of so - called pop – up (once off) restaurants at Bergzicht that charge “*customers*”. Students will be required to design menus, prepare, as well as costing meals and waiting on the tables. Knowledge and skills evidently lacking at the moment regarding the different wine cultivars and their characteristics, as well as the proper way to open a bottle of wine and serve it, can become part of such an exercise. This overall experience will bring students closer to the real world of hospitality they will experience and will expose them to the stress and tension that accompanies it.

Another shortcoming mentioned concerns the very basic or rudimentary nature of the training they receive in the hospitality industry at the moment. Although this basic training is generally of a very good quality and focuses on core competencies required, the necessity was articulated for a more in - depth and comprehensive training regime and expanded curriculum that will better prepare students to become more ambidextrous in fulfilling the wide variety of skills demanded by the hospitality industry. This, it was argued, will by default, infuse students with significantly more confidence once they are required to do their practical or launch their careers.

The sentiments and suggestions mooted in the preceding paragraphs have an inevitable consequence on the length of the overall hospitality training programme. The vast majority of respondents felt that Bergzicht must seriously consider a substantial lengthening of the training programme to around six months. It was further suggested that equal weight be allocated to the theoretical content and the practical time spend at an establishment. It was pointed out by one respondent that the standard of the hospitality industry overall is relentlessly increasing, driven mainly due to an ever more discerning client base, mostly but not exclusively, from overseas. A more thorough, multi faceted and prolonged training programme in hospitality will stand the Bergzicht graduate in good stead to meet this persistent trend in an escalation in the quality service demanded, successfully.

#### **5.2.d The Need for Refresher Training programmes**

Spokespeople for the different establishments were tested regarding the need for refresher training programmes for ex – students of Bergzicht. With the exception of one, all the other interviewees felt that no such need exists or had provisos in this regard. The majority indicated that their in - house training protocol is sufficient and tailored to meet the specific demands of their respective establishments. They stated that they expand on the basic skills that students acquire during their training programme as deemed necessary.

One interviewee stated that although she does not see the need for refresher training programmes, it will be fruitful and opportune to have for the first two years after entering labour market one annual meeting with class participants. This will serve as a platform to learn about difficulties associated with their respective work - related achievements. Such meetings will, in addition, serve as motivation if those struggling, learn of the achievements of their peers that have excelled. Those that have performed exceptionally, or have become upward mobile, will act as role models to others to aspire them to higher performance and achievement.

The one interviewee that was in favour of refresher training programmes felt that periodic sharpening and expansion of skills will be valuable *“in the fast changing hospitality environment, as this will ensure employees (including management) stay on top of their trade”*. Another spokesperson mentioned that *“their (students’) training is our responsibility; we offer adequate training opportunities here”*. However, she remarked that it is vitally important for Bergzicht to keep regular contact (i.e. phone calls and visits) with both the student and management of the

establishment. She added that relationship building between Bergzicht and the industry is very important and will be beneficial to all parties concerned.

### 5.3 Frail Care

In depth interviews were conducted with the senior management of five frail care units in established and reputable homes for the aged in Stellenbosch and Kraaifontein. An interview was also conducted with a tutor of the training programme at Bergzicht and a focus group discussion was facilitated with frail care students in the final stage of their training programme.

All institutions visited open their facilities to Bergzicht students to do their practical and/or have employed students who have completed their studies at Bergzicht as carers in their units. In general the institutions held Bergzicht in high esteem as a training institute. The training is viewed as of a good quality, leaving students at the completion of their training with sufficient skills to work as carers. However, although the skills levels of students were described as *“on par with other training organisations”*, there was a strong sentiment expressed by all managers that the training programme needs to place more emphasis on patient care. This care does not relate to clinical care, as they have the skills set to carry this out sufficiently, but rather the emotional care of patients.

From the responses it seems that within the frail care training programme there is a need to re-evaluate how the patient is defined during the training. As one respondent put it *“Dit is ook nodig dat Bergzicht herdink hoe hulle die mense met wie daar gewerk word beskryf. Wat is hulle aanslag? Studente moet weet dat hulle respek moet hê vir die persoon met wie hulle werk”*. There is a strong message articulated here, i.e. that students should understand that they are not helping the elderly persons but rather that they are indeed serving them. This is the call of all nursing staff working in these institutions. For the older person in a frail care unit, the unit is not a hospital bed but their home and that is the responsibility of the nursing staff to ensure that the resident patient is comfortable and content in their home. *“Dis baie belangrik dat die studente verstaan dat dit hier (the frail care unit) die inwoners se woning is – dis hulle huis die”*.

Another theme highlighted by respondents pertained to the practical sessions for which their institutions avail themselves. All except one respondent, communicated frustration with the practical period of the students with the main concerns pertaining to (i) lack of communication and thus understanding of the structure and expectations of practical sessions (ii) insufficient contact time of tutors with students during their practical and, (iii) the evaluation of students.

In general managers indicated that the practical needs to be better structured with clear definitions of the objectives and expectations regarding each practical period. Managers need to know and clearly understand the expectations pertaining to their role during the practical sessions. What are the skills that the student needs to master and practice during each practical. There was also a common perception that the practical sessions are not the responsibility of the institution, including logistical problems of students, but remains that of Bergzicht, *“As hulle nie die dag vervoer het nie, moet hulle nie die suster bel nie, maar vir Bergzicht en dat moet hulle dit uitsorteer”*.

Respondents consistently responded that the practical sessions are currently not properly managed and coordinated by Bergzicht. There exists a need for a precisely defined and structured practical framework, where the objectives are clearly defined for both students and management of the institutions. It is of the utmost importance that the management and nursing staff of the frail care unit where the practical is done have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and their associated role during each practical sessions as well as what is expected of the students. This would enable them to frame and manage their support to the individual students, *“Die tehuis moet ‘n program hê van die prakties en wat presies van die studente gedurende die prakties verwag word”*.

In addition to the management and nursing staff of the respective frail care units, it is furthermore important that students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them during each practical session, what are the skills they have to focus on during each session, how should their daily routine be structured for the duration of the practical, etc. *“Die verwagtinge van die studente moet ook goed gekommunikeer word. Hulle moet ook weet dat hulle sekere aspekte moet aanleer/versterk en watter aspekte aangeleer en versterk moet word tydens die prakties. Die prakties is nie net om ‘n paar goed af te tick nie”*.

It was further mentioned by respondents that the objectives of each practical session should extend to merely practicing procedures, but should also focus on the practicing and instilling of soft skills in assisting and serving the aged person, *“Prakties is nie net vir prosedures oefen nie, dit is ook om soft skills te oefen”*.

The lack of sufficient contact time with tutors was an aspect highlighted by all managers, an aspect confirmed by students during the focus group discussion. All the institutions communicated a strong sentiment that tutors need to be more involved in the practical sessions of students, supporting them in their challenges working in the frail care units as well as in the practicing of both procedural and soft skills, *“Tutors kom net 2 maal in die 5 weke wat die studente prakties doen. Hulle moet verseker meer kom en ook langer tye by die instansie saam met die student vertoef, hulle kom net te*

*vinnig*". According to the managers frail care units can only provide limited support to students as they are often under pressure due to their own workload, thus, the need for clearly defined objectives and expectations for each practical session.

With the exception of one frail care facility, confusion prevailed regarding the evaluation of students. This stems partly from a lack of understanding the objectives of respective practical periods and partly due to the lack of the facilitation of the evaluation process by Bergzicht. Although they do not mind to assist with this evaluation process, they all thought the facilitation of these evaluations needs to be done by Bergzicht and particularly the tutor, *"Bergzicht moet self die prakties fasiliteer, dit is nie die werk van die instansie waar hulle prakties doen nie. Raak vies as studente aan die einde van die 4 weke kom en vra dat suster gou teken teenoor seker goed op hul vorm. Die evaluasie moet baie beter gestruktureer word"*.

In general, the respective frail care units conveyed positive interactions with Bergzicht students. However, asked if they have a preference for Bergzicht students compared to others, all indicated that their preferences are individually based, thus not informed by the institution a person studied at, but rather the manner in which a student carried herself during the practical sessions. The importance of a student's performance during the practical sessions in making an impression on the management of the frail care unit was highlighted by a few respondents within the context of a frail care market that is currently overflowing with frail care workers seeking employment, *"Wat carers betref in frail care instansies is die mark ook op die oomblik oorvol"*. Although managers indicated that in the case of a vacancy, they tend to advertise widely given the present high availability of carers, they also tend to personally inform individuals to ensure they apply for the position if they either did their practical work there, or who helped out at some point and made a good impression. This has, however, nothing to do with the institution where they studied but rather is all about the individual and her/his attitude towards her work.

### **5.3.a Satisfaction with work performance**

Respondents in general were very positive about the work performance of both students and past students who are now in their employment. The skills level of students was described as generally good with students exhibiting a thorough knowledge of basic procedures that would fall within their responsibility as carers. However, it was again highlighted how the quality of work was not so much as a result of the type of training, but rather dependent upon the individual's passion, enthusiasm, interest and commitment to the work she or he is performing.

Asked about the ability of students to think outside the box, thus, creative thinking within the workplace, managers attributed this virtue to work experience rather than training. In general students were reported to exhibit good human relations, being able to work in a team and interact well with other staff. They also display good work ethics, willing to work and learn, punctual and well mannered.

### **5.3.b Relevance of training programme and need for new skills development**

Commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of the training programme, respondents generally held a positive view of the training programme content amidst a strong sentiment that the practical training programme needs urgent re-thinking and re-designing. This should result in a more structured and clearly defined section of the training linked to clear objectives and expectations and thus, providing strong directives, guidance and structure to both the students and the facility management and staff where the practical is to take place.

As discussed at length above, respondents also pleaded for a stronger emphasis on core human, soft skills (people skills) and a strong emphasis in the training programme on a patient/resident focus in providing care, *"Bergzicht moet meer aandag gee aan 'n inwoner gesentreerde aanslag van studente. Hulle (die studente) is hier vir die inwoners, nie die inwoners vir hulle nie"*.

Although there was a general consensus regarding the appropriateness and relevance of the skills instilled in the Bergzicht Frail Care training programme, some gaps in the content was noted. A few respondents noted the lack of knowledge of students pertaining to Alzheimer and Dementia patients, particularly since these institutions were home to many such patients. This was confirmed in the focus group discussion with students, where they also requested that they are taught more on these subjects in how to approach and care for such patients.



It was also suggested by two respondents, that it is considered to include occupational therapists in the training programme to draw on their knowledge on how to stimulate and care for a patient/resident of a frail care unit. This is particularly relevant in improving the patient orientated or centred dimension of caring, as well as could add to better understand and respond to the unique challenges associated with caring for Alzheimer and Dementia patients.

Given the oversupply of frail care workers in the labour market on an institutional level, it would also seem necessary and opportune that students are provided with a stronger introduction as well as guidance in home base care, a market that is seemingly growing given both the high and rising cost associated with institutional care and a rapidly growing greying population. Towards this, a stronger focus on an entrepreneurial approach in this specialised field is necessary.

### **5.3.c Need for refresher training programmes**

Respondents were asked to indicate the possible need for refresher training programmes in the frail care sector. It was mentioned this was indeed a good initiative and will come at an opportune time to address and re-establish issues such as patient centred caring, something that can get lost in the day to day tasks in a frail care unit. It could also be very valuable to re-instil and fortify basic procedures and to present new approaches and methods to caring for the aged.

In addition, it was pointed out that refresher training programmes would also offer an opportunity, for ex - Bergzicht students to reconnect with their peers and tutors. This would offer an opportunity to students to give valuable feedback to Bergzicht Management and staff to challenges they are experiencing in the workplace and the need for the incorporation of additional skills training in order to improve their work performance. Ultimately such refresher training programmes could become a support mechanism provided to Bergzicht students who have gone through the system and are now employed. It could be used to follow up on progress, to give recognition where it is due, to praise performance and to provide support where needed.

## 5.4 Edu Care

In-depth interviews were conducted with the management of four early childhood development centres that have a history of either accepting Bergzicht students for practical and/or have employed students who completed their training at Bergzicht. An in-depth interview was further conducted with the tutor of the Early Childhood Development (Edu Care) training programme at Bergzicht. In addition, a focus group discussion was facilitated with a group of Edu Care students that have nearly completed their training.

Although not all the day care centres had past Bergzicht students as part of their staff, all have been involved in the practical sessions of Bergzicht students. All the centres held a positive view of Bergzicht and fully supported their mandate. Asked about their employment process and if they would give preference to Bergzicht students compared to applicants from other training institutions, the answer was consistently negative. In fact, none of the institutions has a preference for any student on the basis of where she or he completed their studies. Positions are in all instances filled on merit and exclusively determined by the individual during the interview and how he/she engages with the children of the day care centre.

One recurring theme emanating during discussions related to the readiness of students to enter the work environment subsequent to completing their training at Bergzicht. Bergzicht students, after completing their training are employable on assistant level only. Respondents agreed that in their experience, Bergzicht trainees are not ready to take responsibility for a class when entering the workspace and still require substantial support and guidance. They still need to work under the guidance of an experienced person and are generally not able to work independently, *“Daar is nog baie wat hulle moet leer as hulle hier kom. Die studente kan nie met vrymoedigheid gelos word om ‘n klas waar te neem nie. Daar moet nog iemand by wees om hulle leiding te gee”*.

This inability to work independently following the completion of their studies was attributed to two aspects; (i) a lack in the depth of theoretical content studied and (ii) insufficient practical exposure and experience. Although acknowledging the value of what is covered during training, respondents expressed some concern with the theoretical component, particularly in comparison to students that study at Boland College. It was noted by respondents that the theoretical training programme lacks depth and that the training programme should try to better integrate the theoretical and practical components. Students should preferably be allocated more practical time, and must be introduced to the practical environment already at an earlier stage in the training protocol. Currently

students only spend two weeks doing practical training. This was noted by all respondents as much too short to allow for any proper and sustainable learning.

With regards to the theoretical component, one respondent noted that Bergzicht should chronologically structure its training, i.e. start with aspects related to the developmental goals of the smaller children first and then advance to those of the older children. In this way students will understand the developmental building blocks that have to be put in place for a child to advance and how each fits with and follows the next. Currently the training seems biased towards older children. It was pointed out students are actually not ready to work with this age group yet. As teaching these older age cohorts require higher skilled educators, Bergzicht qualified students would only qualify for assistant teacher positions.

A strong message was sent by all the respondents, including Edu Care students, regarding the period allowed for the practical component, emphasizing that a longer period needs to be allowed for students to be exposed to the realities of this working in an educational environment focused on the very young child. The extension of practical learning would also allow for expanded assessment opportunities, permitting assessments of all formats and types of lesson and not only one, as is currently the case. This will help to build the student's confidence and her or his ability to work independently. Respondents also expressed the need for more interaction with tutors during the practical to both ensure that learning objectives are achieved and also to follow up on student's progress and performance.

In addition to the short period of the practical component, it was also mentioned by three respondents, that the practical component seems to lack structure in terms of clear objectives and goals that have to be achieved during this part of the training. At one centre a strong sentiment was expressed that they would appreciate closer collaboration with and clearly guidelines from Bergzicht pertaining to the practical period and the expected training outcomes defined for this period.

An aspect raised by Edu Care students that clearly were a source of frustration relates to the accreditation of the training programme, more specifically the lack thereof. The students were unanimous in their opinion that the Edu Care training programme of Bergzicht compares well with similar training programmes offered at other institutions, but that they are professionally being penalised when applying for employment opportunities, or considered for career advancement, due to the Edu Care training programme not accredited.

An interesting and disconcerting finding was that amongst the students interviewed, there was no clarity as to the type of employment status they would qualify for. This is indeed disturbing, given

that these students were literally in the final days of their training programme. One participant of the group discussion summed the general ignorance and confusion relating to employment opportunities and further study opportunities available to them after completion of this programme this as follows *“Die limitations en expectations tot die kursus moet aan die begin van die kursus goed deurgepraat word en presies wat jy met die kursus kan gaan doen”*.

#### **5.4.a Satisfaction with work performance**

Asked about the skills level of students, respondents were of opinion that students had a basic knowledge and generally understood the structure of a day care centre and what is expected of them. However, as discussed above, this knowledge is of a modest level that would not allow for independent teaching and the need exists for strong leadership to guide and support them. *“Hulle weet die basiese, wat hulle nodig het is die ervaring”*.

Students' ability to work in a team was rated by all the respondents as generally good, although two respondents did note that sometimes the students experience difficulty to accept the authority of older and more established teachers. One respondent described some students as too frail, *“hulle is te effentjies”* however, others were described as strong with the ability to immediately immerse themselves in the daily routine of the centre.

When probed about the ability of students to solve problems, respondents generally felt that they have not yet acquired the necessary ability in this regard yet. Given their limited practical experience they also generally lacked the ability to think outside the box. This could also be attributed to shortcomings in the theoretical training discussed above.

In general students were described as upholding a strong work ethic, always punctual, neat and presentable, as well as willing and eager to work and learn. One respondent did, however, relied an experience with a student that proved to be unreliable and quite often absent from work, offering an array of excuses. She and her staff also had a negative experience with the student group they hosted, indicating this groups as generally unenthusiastic, always leaving earlier (at around lunch time) and not engaging with the children as would be expected, *“Die tipiese prentjie van ‘n Bergzicht student – hulle sit by die tafel eerder as om met die kinders te speel en interaksie te hê”*.

Asked about the weak and strong aspect associated with the training programme the main concern voiced by all the respondents was the very short time allowed for practical experience and learning.

This sentiment was evident amongst all interviewed, with respondents recommending that the practical component be substantially lengthened. It was clear that the practical is viewed as the core aspect of the training programme where students should be allowed sufficient opportunity to apply and practice what were taught in class. The short period provided for practical prevents students from thoroughly immersing themselves in the ECD and its activities.

There was amongst respondents an appeal for a much stronger synergy between the expected learning outcomes in the theoretical and practical components of the training programme. It is thus important that the expected learning outcomes of the practical component should correspond with those defined for the theoretical component. At the moment respondents find it difficult to guide, support and expose students to the relevant scenarios and activities since they are ignorant of the expected learning outcomes for both the theoretical and practical components and how these complement each other.

#### **5.4.b Relevance of training programme and need for new skills development**

Pertaining to the relevance of the course, respondents noted that although the content of the course is relevant and thus marketable, the current realities of the labour market in particular in the Stellenbosch area is that there exists a paucity of opportunities for employment in this area. Respondents noted that there is currently an oversupply of qualified ECD assistants in the particularly the Stellenbosch area. This, together with a high availability of suitably qualified students that completed the three year accredited training programme offered by other learning institutions, put Bergzicht students (who are presently only qualified to secure employment on assistant level) at a further disadvantage.

Interestingly though, the oversupply of ECD assistants was not found to be an issue in the Helderberg area. One respondent in the Helderberg area suggested that a strong need exists for qualified ECD assistants in the Somerset West and Strand areas. She expressed the need that Bergzicht extend its ECD training programme to the Somerset West and Strand areas, a point particularly note worthy given the closure of the Strand Boland College Campus.

Asked about additional skills needed in the ECD sector that should be incorporated in the Edu Care course, respondents noted the importance of staying abreast of current changes in the formal curriculum, prescribed particularly for children in Grade RR and Grade R classes. In some cases there seem to be a mismatch between the prescriptions of the formal curriculum and content of the Edu

Care course. It was also noted that the course needs to include aspects relating to legislation regarding institutional child care and first aid.

## 5.5 Donors of Bergzicht Training

A number of donors were interviewed regarding their motivation for supporting Bergzicht Training, as well as if they have any suggestions regarding the appropriateness and relevance of its present focus and courses on offer.

The first aspect dealt with the reason(s) for financially supporting Bergzicht, in one instance since its establishment more than two decades ago. From the responses a number of strong themes emerged in this regard, i.e. the strong focus this NPO has on the empowerment of the socio economically vulnerable and marginalized youth of Stellenbosch through the provision of education and training. One respondent articulated the reason for their support since 1992 as follows; *“As we strongly believe in supporting local ideas and initiatives in order to empower people and communities, the Bergzicht Training Centre seemed to be the right partner to make a sustainable impact on grassroots level. The Bergzicht Training Centre offers hands-on vocational training that meet the needs of the local economy and enables trainees to find permanent jobs to support themselves and their families. On another level – as most trainees are women - the Bergzicht Training Centre contributes to the empowerment of women in South Africa and plays in this way a small but significant part in the overall democratic development”*.

The mission of Bergzicht perfectly fits all the donors interviewed. A spokesperson for a liquor company added that Bergzicht’s training of students for the hospitality industry, particularly the tourism sector, as well as some attention devoted to the development of entrepreneurship in their coursework, dovetails perfectly with their main business thrust. One donor added the inclusion of Afrikaans speaking youth is an additional reason for their commitment to Bergzicht. Another donor with a very long association with Bergzicht stated that their financial support offers them the opportunity to influence the socio-economic development of the country by giving people from disadvantaged communities a chance to help themselves and lead a dignified, self-determined life.

Another important aspect raised by more than one respondent was the excellent organizational status Bergzicht enjoys. It was described as *“a reputable organization build on a solid foundation”*, and *“a well run and accountable organization- we get a constant flow of information regarding their programmatic activities and achievements, including the number of trainees that completed*

*respective courses. We also get complete audited annual financial statements that states how funds allocated have been spend – this must be attributed to excellent stewardship”. One donor felt that through their intervention, Bergzicht assists in transforming often marginalized youths becoming “useful citizen”.*

From the long association with Bergzicht that most of these donor organizations have had with Bergzicht, it is clear that there is general consensus amongst them that both its operational focus and institutional integrity is acceptable to these stakeholders. This was further confirmed insofar that all donors foresee a long and fruitful future association with Bergzicht. A spokesperson of one donor declared that they are extremely satisfied with the success of the programmes offered by Bergzicht; *“we have seen Bergzicht train more than 10,000 students over the years - mostly women in dire need to support their families. Over 90 % of the students found permanent jobs. Taking all the family members and dependents into account, we can say that Bergzicht has transformed the lives of more than 100,000 people in the Western Cape and beyond”.* She expressed their organization’s support of periodic independent evaluations of Bergzicht’s operational focus and efficiency as *“it is important to us as a donor that only courses that have economic relevance and where a demand exists for employment for graduates, are offered. We are truly proud to be part of such an amazing story. As a long-term partner Bergzicht has shown that it is a future-orientated organization with a sound management that has the ability and the will to adapt to change and technology. We are planning to support and consult Bergzicht Training Centre also in the future to become an even more relevant service provider to the community of Stellenbosch and beyond”.*

However, a number of illuminating remarks and suggestions were forthcoming from donors regarding Bergzicht. When asked about the relevance and content of current programmes on offer at Bergzicht, one spokesperson suggested that they must re-look their programmes. He recommended a stronger focus on determining the current trends regarding entrepreneurship; *“what is necessary is a stronger synergy between Bergzicht and the economic development trends of Stellenbosch and its environment. What is required is more emphasis being placed on relevant skills development in fast developing sectors. This will satisfy the growing need for specific skills and ensure employment”.* As examples of this he mentioned front – of - house professionals, highly trained waiters and sommeliers which are in great demand.

In addition, the same respondent mentioned that Bergzicht should as a matter of urgency, start focussing more comprehensively on instilling in students an income generating acumen. This aspect should be integrated and become part of all programmes offered. One method that will facilitate this initiative will be staging pop - up restaurants. This can serve two functions: 1) give students the

opportunity to apply their skills in real situations (paying customers), and 2) will serve as income generating opportunities for Bergzicht and students. He recommended Bergzicht must try to excite their sponsors by staging events that pushes the management and students beyond the routine and *“make them venture outside their comfort zone and into a universe of possibilities”*.

Another spokesperson felt strongly that the soft-skills component of all programmes be substantially fortified. She suggested that this focus on the development of the person is very necessary and it can be done even if some of the more technical aspects of the respective courses be curtailed. Another strategically important initiative to be considered is to establish a system of keeping track with their ex –students for a period of at least 2-3 years. Although they will not receive funding for this, it is important that Bergzicht are able to relate the life stories of students that participated in their programmes, especially with the view of mobilizing future funding. This will enable this organization to unequivocally and forcefully illustrate its impact on the enhanced quality of life of their students.

In addition, Bergzicht must endeavour to enhance its public profile significantly. It must become more aggressive in announcing its excellent reputation, to such an extent that it must become the *“go to place”* for students not able to afford other training institutions. Industry must also be made aware that Bergzicht is the preferred destination to source well trained employees. This will help to set them apart from other similar initiatives in Stellenbosch. A representative of a donor with a long association with Bergzicht suggested consideration should be given to offering courses in office administration and secretarial duties. Another donor expressed the need to be kept more informed about the content of the different courses.

## **5.6 Perspectives from Community Leaders**

Bergzicht management wanted the research to explore possible reasons for certain trends they identified concerning an apparent slight downturn in registering for the different training programmes in the recent past amongst the youth of Stellenbosch and its surrounding communities. In addition, the management wanted to get insight into possible reasons that some students lack the requisite discipline in their respective work performances, especially evident during the periods doing their practical, as well as an apparent absence of an overall enthusiastic desire to give their best during these periods, as well as possible reasons that some often terminate their employment and opt for another occupation in some instances.



In order to get some clarity regarding these aspects, leaders from two communities that substantial numbers of students emanate from, were consulted. These leaders and activists are all very informed about the local dynamics as well as the socio economic realities and challenges that face the youth of their respective communities.

One community leader advanced a possible explanation for the lack of interest in Bergzicht training programmes. He attributed this to a large extent to the widespread lack of the development of a sufficiently strong and solid self image and subsequent lack of confidence amongst the youth. He described this lack as a fundamental and serious problem affecting the youth growing up and being socialized in his community. He postulated that this causes, to some extent, a reluctance amongst them to venture out of their insulated and isolated existence in which they feel secure. According to him many suffer from a *“small world syndrome”*.

He recommends that in order to effectively reverse this trend of a declining number of local youths *“knocking on Bergzicht’s door”* a concerted process of empowerment should be conceived and institutionalized. The logical point of departure of such initiative should be to concentrate on the psycho –social level. He recommends Bergzicht must employ a holistic approach towards the development of the person, thus more than merely instilling the technical – training programme related skills and competencies. Specifically referring to the Edu Care programme, he is of opinion that a lack of interest in this training programme can be explained, apart from this lack of self esteem and confidence that prevents them *“taking the plunge”*, could be explained due to firstly, the lack of opportunities in this field caused mainly by the impact of introduction of Grades RR and R, and secondly, the low remuneration attached to the position of Edu Care assistants.

Given the oversupply of Edu Carers in the area of Stellenbosch, he recommends Bergzicht give significantly more attention to the empowerment of their students in entrepreneurial skills. This will enable them to start their home based care facilities and thus help them *“om brood op die tafel te sit”*. Towards this initiative students need be empowered and guided to successfully negotiate the different legal and bureaucratic requirements in order to formalize these initiatives.

According to him this lack of interest and *“do not care”* and laid back attitude exhibited by some students can be that they do not view *“Bergzicht as an institution of first choice”* This implies that students are *“lou warm”* towards this NPO and their respective training programmes and consequently, lack the requisite enthusiasm, passion, discipline and dedication. Bergzicht management must thus reposition itself in this regard and become a sought after destination. The lack of accreditation of their training programmes may contribute to this assessment. He was

confident that once this is achieved the dedication and loyalty and overall performance of students will improve.

The tendency of some students not to stay at place of employment and build a career he ascribes (in some instances) to a toxic and threatening work situation that some of the Bergzicht trained employees and trainees find themselves in; they might be vulnerable to verbal and behavioural maltreatment and bullying by the permanent and often, the more senior and qualified staff; this may further damage their already fragile and brittle perception of the self and level of confidence. He surmises that in the opinion of these people, Bergzicht trained workers come from an inferior context.

In order to address this situation and make them more tenacious and resilient, Bergzicht must empower their students *“om op te staan en hul selfwaarde te verdedig”* In this regard he recommended that Bergzicht develop a mentorship programme that enables them to stay in close contact with their students during their practical periods. He also suggested that a peer support group be developed that will serve as a sounding board for students to ventilate their concerns and that can act as a support network. He mentioned Le Clemance as an example of a situation where students, originating more often than not, from modest, often dysfunctional backgrounds, are expected to interact confidently with and care for patients from a significantly more educated and lavish background. This might be a frightening experience and context to work in for many of them. In conclusion, he re-emphasized that training is much more than merely instilling a skills set, it represents much more an approach of developing the person on a psycho – social level.

Leaders of the second community stressed the impact of a chronic and pervasive impoverished environment associated with material hardship that often leads amongst the youth to a generalized state of having no future perspective. This could explain the apparent lack of interest amongst some young people not seeing sense in investing time and energy in their future wellbeing. Given the impact of this reality on the self esteem of the youth, it is imperative that great care must be taken with the selection of students to follow their training programmes. They must be confident that applicants have the appropriate attitude and inclination to make a success of their studies and subsequent employment once qualified.

In order to make allowance for the impact of the often pressing, unstable and unhealthy socio economic circumstances confronting the youth it crucial that Bergzicht develop a system of personal mentorship that will assist students to successfully deal with their personal insecurities and challenges brought about by the social conditions the youth find themselves in, both within the

household and community. It was stressed that many students entering Bergzicht are bringing these personal vulnerabilities along. The institutionalization of the mooted mentorship initiative will assist students to develop tenacity and resilience and prevent them of opting out and rather decide on a low skilled and paid job at e.g. Checkers.

It must further be realized that some of the young women entering Bergzicht have already assumed the responsibility of motherhood with the associated pressures. This reality may force some to sacrifice their long term goal of completing the training programme and rather opt for immediate reward and gratification, i.e. a low paid job. It was re - emphasized that circumstances like these make the selection of students with the appropriate characteristics and aptitude, i.e., that can perform against odds, of utmost importance.

It was stressed that the lack of discipline and resilience amongst some students should also be seen within the context of an often dysfunctional home and social environment that (might) have a profound impact on the psycho - social development of individuals. The importance of and insistence on a comprehensive mentoring system to act as a continuous supportive and guiding vehicle of personal and social support and “maintenance” (suggested once a week contact session) must thus be seen against this background. It is especially crucial during the period that the student undergoes practical at an institution that close mentoring and support must be available. The spokespeople stated that many of these students are psychologically “wounded”, thus unstable, insecure and vulnerable. This situation is compounded when students are expected to enter uncharted and unknown territory, e.g. when they start their practical or assume employment at for example, a frail care facility or ECD centre. In order to build confidence Bergzicht should consider strongly to take students on excursions (to e.g. frail care and ECD centres) in order to expose them to a foreign and unknown environment in order to broaden their often very limited exposure to the outside world. This will help to build confidence.

It was stressed that the mentorship should not be maintained. After the initial intensive period of support, “*die hand vashou fase*”, there can be a slight relaxation of support, although a distinct support system should be maintained to fall back on should the need arise. It was further pointed out that this mentorship must not absolve the student of her or his responsibility to perform at best. They must be made aware that Bergzicht represents a unique opportunity, a second chance in life, but that ultimately, it will depend on them whether they are going to embrace this break and make a success of their life ultimately.

Another reason for an evident lack of enthusiasm, dedication and resilience put forward is that some of these young people are not cut out to engage in formal training, lacking the necessary intellectual prowess and / or hunger. To accommodate these cases Bergzicht should consider developing more practical training programmes (with little theory involved) with the prospect of enabling students to start a so-called cottage industry or business from home; examples mooted were hair dressing and cake and bread baking – both these initiatives will translate into income generating ventures, something that is sorely needed in Cloetesville “*dit sal elke dag brood op die tafel sit*”.

## **5.7 Core finding and recommendations**

Based on the evidence collected during the evaluation and presented here, the following recommendations are made.

### *5.7.1. Recommendations pertaining to the restructuring of the respective training programmes*

A consistent theme that emanated from discussions with respondents associated with all three learning programmes is the need for the extension of the duration of the respective training programmes. The extension related specifically to the practical components of these three learning opportunities. In the case of hospitality the need to expose students to diverse scenarios typical of this industry in the Cape Winelands area, is required. It is essential that students enrolled in this programme are exposed to the broad spectrum of establishments in the industry, such as coffee shops, restaurants, tasting rooms, hotels and guesthouses. A specific need was also expressed for the acquisition of rudimentary albeit sufficient knowledge of viticulture, particularly relating to different cultivars and basic service protocols.

In both the ECD and Frail Care sectors, respondents urged that a stronger synergy be established between the expected learning outcomes in the theoretical and practical components of the training programme. There is a particular need expressed to define the expected learning outcomes of the practical components and that these should correspond closely and clearly with those defined for the theoretical component. This will enable institutions of placement to contribute in a meaningful and structured manner towards the training partnership of which they are inherently part of.

With regard to the practical components of programmes the need was expressed for closer and sustained contact between tutors, students and the institutions of placement.

**Recommendation:** Training programmes are restructured to (i) accommodate longer practical periods, (ii) ensure structural and academic synergy between the theoretical and practical components of the learning programmes and (iii) closer and sustained contact of tutors with students and institutions of placement.

### *5.7.2 Accreditation of the Edu Care programme*

In an institutional environment where there is a consistently higher premium put on the quality of a training programme, which is directly associated with its formal accreditation, the present lack thereof in the case of the Bergzicht qualification is a distinct disadvantage to the students that study here. This is strategic important given the competing presence of other institutions that offer a similar training programme deemed as more comprehensive and of higher esteem due to its accreditation status.

**Recommendation:** Accreditation of Edu Care programme

### *5.7.3 Entrepreneurial approach in training*

The increasing saturation of available employment opportunities in all the different sectors that Bergzicht train the youth for, with specific reference to the ECD and Frail Care sectors, necessitates an increasing focus on entrepreneurial skills development for students in order for them to engage successfully and sustainably in income generating ventures. This new focus will require a re-assessment of the purpose and the end goal of the respective programmes. This will require the application of skills taught in various environments, as well as the inclusion of legislative requirements that needs to be met. Ultimately the goals should shift from predominantly training for employment to training for self-employment. This would allow students to expand their options from primarily waiting for an employment opportunity to creating their own sustainable livelihood and thus put bread on the table.

**Recommendation:** Stronger focus on the development of entrepreneurship in programmes

#### 5.7.4 *Self development of students*

A pervasive and consistent sentiment expressed passionately by all respondents concerned the importance of the personal development of students. This relates to confidence, self esteem, tenacity and a positive attitude to the work environment and challenges posed by this environment. The presences of these characteristic in an individual is often deemed of more importance than the skill level presented by students.

**Recommendation:** The personal development of students should become an overarching strategy and goal in all the programmes. This should be further extended and fortified by the development of a mentoring programme specifically during practicals and periodic mentoring during the first year after exiting Bergzicht.

#### 5.7.5 *The development of new skills programmes*

- Drivers licenses
- Information technology systems, particular relevant to the hospitality industry.

#### 5.7.6 *Generic recommendations*

- It was noted by respondents that Bergzicht needs to significantly enhance its public profile. This could be achieved by more strategic advertising of both what is offered and of its achievements. Particularly a stronger presence in social media is required. The objective of this is that Bergzicht establishes itself as the “go to place” for students and employers.
- Greater care should be taken in the placement of students at locations of training by ensuring a close alignment (i) the learning objectives of the course and what is offered at the institution of placement and (ii) the needs of the latter and the personality and skill set offered by the student.