



EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ANNUAL REPORT, FROM 1 APRIL 2018 TO 31 MARCH 2019

INTRODUCTION

It is with great gratitude that we do not only report on the services that were rendered to persons with disabilities during the financial year that ended on the 31st March 2019, but also refer to the celebration of Employment Solutions' 20 years' existence.

The road walked in the past 20 years was characterised by many changes to policies and operations in an effort to adapt to economic influences, expectations from partners and customers and needs expressed by persons with disabilities. The model of sustaining the organisation whilst delivering the best possible services to persons with disabilities required these regular changes. During the last decade the introduction of developmental services to disability organisations in Tshwane, through the Jacaranda Protective Workshop Forum, extended Employment Solutions' contribution to empowerment in the wider disability sector.

Initially the objective for the protective workshop was to endeavour to get to a place where Employment Solutions primarily relied on contract generated income. It however became clear that the economic influences, mechanisations in several of the customers' industries were accompanied by negative influences that threatened the existence of the organisation. It is therefore only possible to sustain the organisation's services with a combination of contracts, government subsidies and project funding. Added to funding income, the Level 1 BBBEE rating opened additional positive opportunities.

On an operational level the cycles of relative positive and negative financial positions of Employment Solutions can be identified in the various incidents of rationalisation and saving measures that were implemented. Increases and decreases in salaries/ wages/ stipends as well as the absence and percentages of bonuses reflected the ups and downs of company's financial status.

THE YEAR 2018/9

This year the positive side of rationalisations during the previous periods was evident. Opportunities for internal advancement or persons with disabilities were created and with mentoring and empowering they successfully moved from being operators to being part of the management team. Management and administrative systems were adapted and upgraded to cope with a more complicated range of activities and management. The importance of quality financial capacity was highlighted as well.

The year 2018/9 was characterised by new partnerships which had a positive influence not only for the organisation, but it specifically benefitted most of the workers/ participants with reference to the wages/ stipends they received. The partnership with the Department of Labour was the main reason for the increased income for most of the workers. Changes, internal development and growth in different management areas, as well as innovative thinking contributed towards the sustainability of the organisation and the range of programmes that were available to persons with disabilities.

PROTECTIVE WORKSHOP SERVICES

Within the protective workshop the number of persons with disabilities increased to 150. The appointment of young persons with disabilities contributed to realising Employment Solutions vision of "empowering through employment". More people were meaningfully engaged and they were involved in constructive daily activity programmes, either on a more production orientated level or in an environment where care was the main priority.

A lot of time and energy were spent on the introduction of 2 new projects. The archive document scanning especially provided vocational opportunities for young deaf persons to not just have a work, but also learn and improve their skills levels. With the complicated communication that affected the on-the-job training to increase efficiency and productivity extensive supervision was required. With an average age of 26, these were the newly appointed candidates' first jobs. They were thus provided the space to grow, increase confidence and to take responsibility to be motivated to negotiate relevant issues in the work space. The other new project that was introduced was of an assembling nature with high volume requirements. Many opportunities were created for unemployed persons with disabilities in this project, whilst internal candidates with managerial potential had the chance to step up and grab these opportunities.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Training opportunities were created and included the following, on top of the internal job-related mentoring and facilitated production orientated sessions:

- Health & Safety Representative training
- First Aid training
- Fire Fighting training
- Forklift training
- Financial Literacy training
- Project Management training

JACARANDA PROTECTIVE WORKSHOP FORUM

The Jacaranda Protective Workshop Forum continued its role as a support structure, information centre and training hub for other protective workshops in Tshwane. The relationships with member organisations and the participation in the monthly meetings, training sessions and events were very positive. The member organisations had also shown their commitment to the Jacaranda Forum.

The Forum's retail outlet, We Can – Rea Kgoni was part of the socio-economic empowerment opportunities available to member protective workshops. In an attempt to sustain the shop, decreased rent had been negotiated and the space had also been utilised for craft product training sessions. During this year there was an increase in the number of training sessions available to member organisations. Some were also conducted at member workshops. The Jacaranda Forum and the various member protective workshops were marketed on a variety of platforms. The subsidy received from the Department of Social Development enabled the organisation to sustain and develop the Forum as a community resource.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<p>Effective management and empowerment of personnel and leaders to maximise participation and effective management within the protective workshop</p>	<p>Regular internal management meetings included for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-weekly Operational meetings • Monthly Staff meetings • Weekly Production meetings • Weekly HR meetings • Weekly Wellness meetings, including personal development • Project related meetings focused on production/ activity processes
<p>Creation of a healthy, safe and disability – friendly work environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Health & Safety meetings • Executed 12 emergency evacuation exercises • Repaired and serviced the 3 vehicles to remain roadworthy • Repaired the building and equipment according to need and affordability • Completed temporary floor repairs in specific areas • Provided necessary safety clothes & equipment • Provided Health & Safety Representative training • Provided First Aid training • Provided fire fighting training

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<p>Organisation of meaningful activities and simulated work experience for the participation of 135 to 150 persons with disabilities in the protective workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided continuous work and activities • Sustained an activity centre for those in need of more care • Daily participation in the different projects that focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assembling & Packing - Sealing & packing - Sewing - Weighing & packing - Archive document scanning - Bar code scanning - Sorting and filing of documents - Preparing courier bags for re-use - GIS data capturing
<p>Facilitation of an appropriate Wellness Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Employee Assistance/ Social Work services • Provided beneficiaries with sandwiches and coffee/ tea • Distributed food donations, especially during the Ramadan period • Wellness Programme managed in the weekly Wellness Committee meetings During these meetings attention was given to issues like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work conditions - Induction of new workers - Policy changes that directly affect workers and participants - Socialisation events - Feeding scheme - Evacuation strategies& procedures - Daily activity programmes and physical exercises
<p>Provided access to psycho – social services</p>	<p>This services included amongst others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 social events • Access to Social Work services • Developmental and problem solving groups • Provision of refreshments and sandwiches • Small group discussion focused on work relationships
<p>The Jacaranda Forum facilitated training initiatives for 25+ disability organisations in Tshwane</p>	<p>Training sessions organised for members of the Jacaranda Forum, were focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-made product development sessions • Presentation of products made by persons with disabilities at various events and markets • Personal development of persons involved in managing protective workshops
<p>Execution of a creative Disability Awareness Initiative in the community</p>	<p>Disability Awareness Projects were run that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness FB posts and You tube video clips • Orientation programmes were presented to forth year nursing students of SG Lourens Nursing College and Occupational Therapy students of the University of Pretoria • A very successful Mandela Day programme where the organisation received visitors from different companies was hosted.
<p>Management of a Marketing Strategy for Employment Solutions and its specific projects like the Jacaranda Forum, to market the abilities of persons with disabilities</p>	<p>The strategy included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandela Day event • Presentations were done at various stakeholders • Marketing posts were made on Facebook • Disability awareness packs were distributed • Awareness events like the CANSA Shavathon were organised at We Can

PARTNERSHIPS

The relationships with our loyal customers secured the basis from which Employment Solutions was able to sustain the organisation and its activities. They also provided variety in the workplace and the ability to fit specific persons' abilities to specific tasks. There were direct benefits to workers and participants with disabilities as a result of these partnerships. Job creating was one of the major results of these partnerships.

More than 20 persons who had been active in the protective environment were also placed in the open labour market. This is an indication that they utilised the opportunities to develop their capacities. They were also had the confidence to that the leap into another work environment.

The development of Employment Solutions' infra-structure and the provision of work activities to facilitate these services were only possible as the result of the support of government subsidies, sponsors, funding partners and especially loyal companies that provided work activities to be completed by the participants with disabilities. The work from various companies ensured that persons with disabilities could actively participate in society.

In retrospect, the sustainability of the organisation, the developments within Employment Solutions as well as the range and quality of services rendered to persons with disabilities, were driven by the motivation to uplift and empower vulnerable persons with disabilities who have little or no opportunities in society to be constructively and gainfully engaged in a workplace.

Employment Solutions for People with Disabilities is therefore privileged to thank:

Partners:

- Department of Social Development
- Department of Labour
- Gauteng Provincial Association for Persons with Disabilities

Sponsors:

- Momentum
- National Lotteries Commission
- Department of Sport, Arts, Craft and Recreation

Supporting Companies:

- AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd
- Alco – Safe (Pty) Ltd
- AVBOB (Pty) Ltd
- Bosal Afrika (Pty) Ltd
- Department of Health
- Heunis Steel
- Life Health Care – Wilgers Hospital
- Marcom (Pty) Ltd
- NCP Chlorchem (Pty) Ltd
- RAM Couriers (Pty) Ltd
- Secundes (Pty) Ltd
- Ver-tex Solutions
- Vodacom (Pty) Ltd Warehouse

The loyal support of the Board of Directors, colleagues in the disability sector and members of the broader community is highly appreciated. It is also a privilege to extend a special word of thanks to the staff, participants and workers that invested their time, capabilities and energy throughout the year to ensure Employment Solutions' sustained service delivery to persons with disabilities. Their commitment cannot be regarded too highly.

In the 20 years of Employment Solutions for People with Disabilities' existence the continued delivery of services to persons with disabilities in a supportive work and work-related environment was the major driver and greatest motivator to continue. To witness the growth and well - being of persons with disabilities made all the efforts worthwhile.

Adv. Linda Pienaar

Chairperson of the Board of Directors