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Strengthening university-enterprise cooperation in South Africa to support regional development by enhancing lifelong learning skills, social innovations and inclusivity / SUCSESS

Key Research Findings 28 October 2020

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Research Objectives

- To determine whether the *teaching environment* is currently producing the *competencies and skills* required by industry for **employability** (to have the skills and personal attributes to gain employment and be successful in chosen field)
- 2. To assess the impact of *university/industry collaboration activities* on students' **work readiness (**make a dynamic start in industry and quickly adapt to the job)





Research Methodology

- Data collection: Tourism, Hospitality and Business Management
 - Surveyed senior students online questionnaire (509)
 - Interviewed lecturers (44)
 - Interviewed industry and government (29)
- South Africa, UK and Finland
 - Benchmarking
 - Best case practices







University reputation

- Students
- Industry
- Lecturers



Key findings



Role of lecturers and teaching environment in career preparation

South Africa vs Finland/UK

- Take responsibility for tasks
- Take initiative
- Meet deadlines





Key findings

More South African students (vs Finland/UK)

- Low expectation of finding ideal job
- Uncertain of workplace expectations
- Afraid to start looking for a job



Key findings Employability



What makes a student "employable"? Industry:

1. Attitude

- ✓ Willingness to learn/open-mindedness
- Adaptability
- Reliability
- Confidence

2. Skills/competencies (apart from technical/job specific)

- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Teamwork
- Technological



Key findings Teaching gaps



Industry generally satisfied with performance of universities in preparing students for work but see **gaps** in

- Entrepreneurial skills
- Technological skills
- Understanding of the work environment

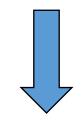


Key findings Overcoming gaps



Practical exposure increases student employability and work readiness

University/enterprise collaboration (UEC)





Industry collaboration





Key findings Collaboration



Work Integrated Learning/Internships at organisations

Industry Scholarships/bursaries with no formal expectation of employment

Research/development projects about industry issues (but not working with industry)

Research/development projects about industry issues (working in partnership with industry)

Industry Mentorship programmes (industry leaders mentoring students)

Entrepreneurship programmes (e.g. where students have to start some form of venture while studying)

Industry Career advice programmes (e.g. Days, events,)

Incubator type assistant programmes (where students work on developing innovative solutions to business problems)

Recruitment drives by organisations e.g. companies coming to the university to try to recruit students)

Industry/Government Guest Lectures

Industry funding for innovative developmental work

Simulated case study projects (i.e. finding solutions for a real-life type industry case/problem through using simulation techniques)

Practical industry courses/certificates, supplementary to the diploma/degree e.g. practical courses such as Galilieo, Food & Beverage courses)

Industry Workshops/Seminars attended by students

Student presentations to industry as part of assessment

Industry bursaries with an employment outcome after completion of degree/diploma

Student-run enterprises e.g. Campus Tours

Group visits to related industry enterprises (field trips)

Student "Day-at-work" or vacation programmes

Industry involvement in assessment Practical engagement with alumni (e.g. alumni as mentors)





Key findings Collaboration



• Low involvement in SA

(20% on average, across types of collaboration)

Benefits of involvement

Students

- Appreciate and respect diversity
- Learnt more about themselves
- Mind opened to more career paths
- Improvement in work skills

Industry

- Talent spotting
- Innovation and energy
- Positive image for organisation







Challenges

Lecturers: High student numbers

Industry: Lack of capacity in industry

Students: Lack of resources







The consequences of the **COVID-19 pandemic** presents a key challenge for collaboration practices, employability and general economic growth and, due to the uncertainty, students need to:

- Build networks even before graduation
- Look to technology as having an increasingly important role in the work environment
- Focus on resourcefulness and entrepreneurship



Key recommendations



Teaching environment

- Curriculum and industry alignment
- Student awareness of relevance of studies to industry
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Technological awareness and capabilities
- Business ethics

Collaboration

- Using technology (e.g. "Virtual" collaboration)
- Credit-bearing
- Incentives for lecturers
- Two-way process







Thank you

The 'SUCSESS' Partners