The Tracking of Occupational Development of Thogomelo Learners Study

Final Report
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Final Report

PATH

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Acknowledgments

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A special thanks is offered to the following team members who were involved in the study design, concept note development, study conduct, and management and reporting of the Tracking Study:

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**Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>community-based organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCG</td>
<td>community caregiver</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSD</td>
<td>Department of Social Development</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>focus group discussion</td>
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<td>HDA</td>
<td>Health Development Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSRC</td>
<td>Human Sciences Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>HWSETA</td>
<td>Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>IHAA</td>
<td>International HIV/AIDS Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>memorandum of understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>nongovernmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPO</td>
<td>nonprofit organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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Glossary of terms

**Assessment:** This is a process of collecting evidence to show that a learner has achieved the expected assessment criteria and outcomes as written in the unit standards. A learner who has met the outcomes and assessment criteria is deemed “competent.”

**Credit:** A credit is the total amount of learning that is needed for a specific unit standard and qualification. It is measured in notional hours. Ten hours of learning equate to one credit.

**Moderation:** This is a process where a moderator checks that the work done by the assessor and the assessment itself were fair for all the learners.

**Unit standard:** A unit standard is a registered statement with the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA). It has a set of outcomes and assessment criteria, as well as other requirements that the learner has to meet in order to be deemed competent.

**Qualification:** A qualification is the formal recognition that the learner has achieved a set of unit standards with a set number of credits.

**Skills development program:** A skills development program is a learning program that is aimed at building the skills of people who are already working in a particular field.

**Verification:** This is a process through which HWSETA checks that the assessor and moderator have followed the principles of assessment and moderation and that the training organization is compliant with requirements of HWSETA and has the required policies and procedures in place to ensure that learners were given every opportunity to be deemed competent.
Executive summary

South Africa has more than 3.8 million orphaned and vulnerable children. The responsibility for creating a safe and nurturing environment for these children rests heavily on South Africa’s community caregivers (CCGs), who are estimated to number 65,000. This responsibility represents a significant challenge for a cadre of social service providers who are often informally employed and remunerated through volunteer stipends. Many CCGs lack the formal training necessary to address the full range of needs experienced by children in their care, as well as the skills and knowledge to respond effectively to their own psychosocial needs. The Thogomelo Project (“Thogomelo” means “to care” in Venda) was initiated by the Department of Social Development (DSD) in 2008 in response to the need for CCG capacity development, occupational recognition, and career pathing. Three accredited curricula in psychosocial well-being, child protection, and supportive supervision were developed, and 3,864 CCGs and supervisors (collectively referred to as “learners” in this report) were trained over seven years during the eight-year life of the project (2008 to 2016).

One of the expected outcomes of the Thogomelo trainings was that learners would accumulate credits toward a qualification and develop a career path in the social development sector, thereby expanding the social service workforce and contributing to the ministerial priority of job creation. In June 2014, consortium partners, the DSD and the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) embarked on a study to look at the range of other trainings undertaken by CCGs who participated in the Thogomelo trainings during the first two years of training (2009 to 2010) to see if they accessed other training toward a qualification. More specifically, the study sought to find out whether learners take further training after Thogomelo training, and to ask the learners about the enablers and hindrances to further training toward a qualification. Ultimately, this review is intended to inform future DSD training programs, and the information generated through this study can help both the DSD and HWSETA to identify areas where additional focus may be needed to help South Africa’s caregivers to have a more formal role in the evolving social services sector.

The study targeted learners who had participated in Thogomelo trainings during the first two years of the project in order to assess caregivers’ experiences during a period of at least two years post-training. Activities were conducted in two phases. The first phase of the study consisted of a review of Thogomelo learners’ records in the HWSETA database, followed by brief telephone surveys to identify learners who had done further training toward a qualification after Thogomelo, and those who had not done so. The second phase of the study consisted of 14 focus group discussions (FGDs), with four to six FGDs conducted in each of three provinces—Gauteng, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga.

Key results from phase 1

Of the 475 learners registered during the first two years of Thogomelo trainings, records were available in the HWSETA database for 328 (69%). For these 328 learners, the HWSETA database also indicated that 32% in Limpopo (42/131), 19% in Mpumalanga (19/99), and 12% in Gauteng (12/98) were registered for other trainings in addition to Thogomelo. The majority of learners who were reached through the telephone survey reported that they had done further training after Thogomelo. This ranged from 63% in Gauteng, to 74% in Limpopo, to 97% in Mpumalanga.

Key results from phase 2
The enabling factors for those learners who did further training included the following:

- Self-motivation.
- Availability of financial resources.
- Availability of information about further trainings.
- Support from family members and work colleagues.

Factors that hindered training for those learners who did not pursue further training included the following:

- Unclear learner selection process.
- Lack of information about trainings that are available.
- Lack of financial resources.
- Lack of support from managers and colleagues.
- Heavy workloads.
- Not meeting the entry criteria for trainings.
- A perception among some of the older caregivers that they were too old to do further training.
- Disinterest or reluctance to take tests/exams (reported mostly by older caregivers).
- Personal health issues.
- Family obligations/expectations.
- Geography (in relation to access to information about trainings and logistical constraints in reaching trainings).

While the majority of learners who have received Thogomelo training have gone on to do further training, there is a need for clearer, more systematic, and more effective communications about training opportunities for CCGs through direct channels, as well as more transparency in the process by which individuals are nominated for trainings. Lack of financial resources is a major hindrance to further training, and learners would like trainings for CCGs to be subsidized within a clear career pathway that they can take toward a specific qualification. Learners would also like a more transparent system to track the credits that they have received for all trainings, and a mechanism by which learners can easily determine whether they have sufficient credits toward a qualification.

The following recommendations are offered to stakeholders to strengthen support to CCGs in pursuing further training:

1. Ensure that training participants understand that getting a certificate in Thogomelo training or any accredited training is valuable and can help them gain the skills and knowledge required for obtaining certain jobs, such as social auxiliary work, but that the certificate alone does not guarantee a job or a better job. This will help avoid creating unrealistic expectations among learners about the training with regard to specific jobs or advancement.

2. Create tailored guidance to help CCGs obtain a clear vision of what path they can take toward a qualification. This includes explaining to CCGs at large (not only those who go for a specific training) both what accreditation is, as well as the details of the qualification process, which specific courses are required and what other requirements must be met, and what support is available to CCGs to navigate through the process, including funding opportunities.
3. Ensure that the credits that Thogomelo learners (and others) have earned for accredited trainings are accurately reflected in the HWSETA database and that there is a mechanism by which learners can easily determine whether they have sufficient credits toward a specific qualification.

4. Create clear, systematic, effective communication about training opportunities for CCGs through information channels that they can access directly.

5. Ensure more transparent selection processes for specific training opportunities. Older and younger CCGs experience many hindrances to training and accreditation in common, but older CCGs expressed additional concerns that should be taken into account.

6. Provide subsidized or free training within a clear career pathway that learners can take toward a specific qualification.
1. Background

Literature review

The increasing number of orphans and vulnerable children in need of care is perhaps one of the greatest social burdens in South Africa and other neighboring countries in the Southern African region. South Africa has more than 3.8 million orphaned and vulnerable children. The responsibility for creating a safe and nurturing environment for these children rests heavily on South Africa’s community caregivers (CCGs), who are estimated to number 65,000. This responsibility represents a significant challenge for a cadre of social service providers who are often informally employed and remunerated through volunteer stipends. Many CCGs lack the formal training necessary to address the full range of needs experienced by children in their care, as well as the skills and knowledge to respond effectively to their own psychosocial needs. South Africa has a long history of community participation and mobilization organized through civil society structures, as well as community care provision to vulnerable communities through community-based organization (CBO) programs (van Pletzen and MacGregor 2013). While the new democratic government did not implement a national CCG program post-1994, there was a large increase in CCG activity in response to the HIV epidemic and the overburdened public health system in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The South African national government has relied mainly on partnerships with a wide array of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) to deploy CCGs in impoverished communities. Thus, while the government has strived to provide enabling environments and funding, many NPOs operating at the community level have taken on basic care delivery, as well as the tasks of enrolling, training, and managing CCGs; paying their stipends or salaries; and integrating their services within existing health and other social structures (van Pletzen and MacGregor 2013). These NPOs range from CBOs performing basic care and support services within the home environment in resource-constrained communities to well-resourced national and international NPOs offering care and support, or fulfilling training and managerial roles.

A review of the published literature on CCGs in sub-Saharan Africa did not identify any previous research on the career development of this cadre, or efforts to transition CCGs into more formal social service workforce positions through training. Studies to explore the impact of training on further education and career opportunities from the United States have been done in other fields, which, although quite different, offer some useful perspectives. In one study, described by Mooney et al., the career paths of university students who studied marketing were tracked after graduation in order to gauge the program’s impact on their career paths over time (Mooney et al. 2006). More than 200 graduates were surveyed at regular intervals from 1970 through 2004 via a mail-based questionnaire that used a combination of open-ended questions with defined response criteria and a chronological career journey chart that required participants to map their individual career journeys. Seventy-two percent of graduates indicated that they had furthered their education beyond their undergraduate degrees, typically due to needs related to personal growth and development, employment requirements, and additional and further certifications. Thirteen percent indicated that they had moved from marketing to other professions, with cited reasons including better earning potential, family and life circumstances, needing a new challenge, and administrative decisions. In another study by Akos et al. (2007), the authors indicate that “career and academic aspirations are clearly influenced by
multiple intrapersonal and systemic factors. Some individual factors related to students’ aspirations include their level of interpersonal skills, self-reliance, self-control and level of maturity/responsibility.” Systemic variables related to academic and career aspirations include students’ socio-economic status and the level of families’ support and engagement in the students’ education. Gender and race can also be influential. Mahoney and Merritt (1993) found that white students were more likely to be enrolled in college/university programs than black students, while research over a decade ago by Trusty and Niles (2004) pointed to the greater likelihood of women completing a bachelor’s degree compared to men.

The Thogomelo Project

The Thogomelo Project started as a five-year pilot of accredited training for CCGs initiated by South Africa’s Department of Social Development (DSD) in 2009, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). A three-year extension was awarded for the period 2013 to 2016. The project is managed by a consortium composed of PATH, Health Development Africa (HDA), and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (IHAA). The overall project goal is to enhance the psychosocial well-being and child protection skills of CCGs in order to improve the quality of care offered to the vulnerable children in their care.

To this end the project has developed three curricula in psychosocial support, child protection, and supportive supervision. These curricula equip learners to identify the causes of stress in their lives, and to enhance their own psychosocial well-being, while also developing the knowledge and skills needed to effectively respond to child protection violations and create supportive work environments. The curricula have been registered as accredited skills development programs with the South African Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA). Accredited training provides credits that can incrementally contribute toward a qualification which will, in turn, facilitate entry-level jobs, remuneration, and a career path. This helps to bridge the skills gap in South Africa and contributes to the expansion and diversification of the social service workforce.

Currently most of South Africa’s approximately 65,000 CCGs are informally employed and paid a volunteer stipend by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or CBOs to implement programs related to HIV/AIDS or tuberculosis. Given that CCGs are increasingly recognized as the entry level of the social service workforce, capacity development of this crucial cadre is urgently needed, as is formal recognition of their role and standardized remuneration scales. A national needs assessment of CCG training needs and gaps in training provision conducted at the project’s inception highlighted a lack of accredited training for CCGs that is aligned to occupationally based qualifications. As the first accredited curricula for CCGs in psychosocial well-being and child protection, as of May 2014, the Thogomelo curricula are aligned to the Further Education and Training Certificate: Counselling. At the time of this study, the project had trained 2,704 CCGs and supervisors across all nine provinces in South Africa. Of these, 1,777 were successfully verified and 1,217 deemed competent by the HWSETA.

One of the expected outcomes of the project was that Thogomelo learners would be able to accumulate credits toward a qualification and develop a career path in the social development sector,
thereby expanding the social service workforce and contributing to the ministerial priority of job creation.

2. Purpose of the study

The main research question that the study sought to answer was: What factors enable or hinder further training/the career progression of Thogomelo learners, and how may the project have influenced their decisions?

Routine monitoring undertaken by the Thogomelo project through its various tools (e.g., the pre- and post-training tests and baseline and endline surveys) in the pilot phase of the project suggests that the Thogomelo training has enhanced learners’ knowledge and skills. Beyond this, however, project staff and other stakeholders wished to understand how Thogomelo training may have influenced the learners’ subsequent occupational development and career pathing. This is in keeping with the expectation that learners will accumulate credits from a number of unit standards toward a qualification that will further their occupational development.

To explore the extent to which this is happening, and understand the enablers and hindrances that influence whether learners are able to use the Thogomelo modules as part of their occupational development, the study was designed with the following objectives:

**Phase 1 objectives:**
1. To verify how many Thogomelo learners currently registered on the HWSETA database have been assessed and deemed competent.
2. To identify from the HWSETA database the number of learners who have accumulated additional credits toward a qualification above those earned from the Thogomelo training, and in which learning areas.
3. To identify from the HWSETA database the number of learners who have not accumulated additional credits after the Thogomelo training.

**Phase 2 objective:**
To establish the enablers and hindrances related to undertaking further training toward a recognized qualification after the Thogomelo training, from the perspectives of the Thogomelo learners themselves, by conducting focus group discussions (FGDs).

**Anticipated contribution of study results:**
It is anticipated that the tracking study results will contribute to the knowledge of how the Thogomelo learners have progressed, or not progressed, toward a qualification within at least two years after training. The tracking study was intended to highlight the enablers and hindrances of further training toward a qualification as described by the learners themselves. This knowledge is invaluable to all the key stakeholders, including the DSD, HWSETA, and consortium partners, as the project draws to an end and activities are transitioned to the DSD. Discussions are currently under way to ensure that
national CCG training is aligned to a specific qualification, which is in turn aligned to specific occupations. The findings from the tracking study will inform and help shape the decisions that are made to support this effort.

3. Ethical considerations

PATH staff submitted an application to the PATH Research Determination Committee describing the rationale, activities, and anticipated uses for the information to be generated by the study. The Research Determination Committee determined that the study did not meet the definition of research and therefore did not require a full internal ethics review. Locally, PATH staff also submitted an application to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Research Ethics Committee. It was approved for a one-year period by the HSRC on April 17, 2014, documented as Ethics Clearance of HSRC Research Ethics Committee Protocol No. REC 03/20/11/13: The Tracking of the Occupational Development of Thogomelo Learners Study. Informed consent procedures are described below.

4. Methods

Study design

Phase 1

The first phase of the study, conducted in May 2014 in collaboration with HWSETA, consisted of a records review, based on HWSETA’s database of training records, and a brief telephone survey of learners who had taken one of the Thogomelo modules during the first two years of the training. The aim of the database search was to identify the Thogomelo learners who had pursued further training toward a qualification after Thogomelo, and those who had not done so. It was necessary to use the HWSETA database for this purpose because the trainings that a Thogomelo training participant may have taken after Thogomelo are not recorded on the Thogomelo project database. This information is only on the HWSETA database, as the HWSETA base is the official repository of learner records for accredited training. The aim of the telephone survey was to confirm the database records, record some basic demographic information, and invite former Thogomelo training participants to participate in the FGDs planned for phase 2.

In order to access learner records held on the HWSETA database, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between PATH and HWSETA. The MOU was drawn up in order to ensure the confidentiality and protection of learner information in the conduct of the study. A team composed of two PATH staff, one staff member from HWSETA, and one from Deloitte and Touche searched the HWSETA database for all learners who had been trained in year 1 (2008) and year 2 (2009) of the project, using the learners’ identity numbers, which were held on the Thogomelo project database (i.e., the Training Information Management System [TIMS] database). A tracking database tool (Appendix 1) was designed with the assistance of partner organizations, including HWSETA, in order to document the learners’ acquired qualifications, including both Thogomelo and other trainings.
Frequent stakeholder meetings were held between partners to discuss the progress and challenges of phase 1 data collection.

Based on the learner information available from project data, the team designed a database tool, which was a spreadsheet containing each learner’s name, identity document number, the name of the training service provider through which the learner took the Thogomelo module, the year in which the learner participated in the training, the name of the curriculum that the learner studied, and any other training programs that the learner had undertaken. The highest level of education obtained by the learner before Thogomelo and the learner’s age were also captured in the database tool. The study team was able to match these records individually to what was documented on the HWSETA database, most importantly the information about trainings in addition to Thogomelo that each individual had taken.

Once the team had completed the database review, they conducted interviews with all learners who could be reached by telephone. As mentioned above, the aim of the telephone survey was to confirm the database records, record some basic demographic information, and invite former Thogomelo training participants to participate in the FGDs planned for phase 2. The telephone survey questionnaire (Appendix 2) contained a series of questions to verify whether the training participant was still a CCG (and, if not, any reasons for leaving the CCG field and current employment status), whether the course records on file were correct, (3) whether the training participant had undertaken additional credited or unaccredited training, and (4) any reasons for not undertaking additional training if he/she had not done so. At the end of this brief verification, the learners were invited to attend FGDs in their respective provinces (Appendix 2). The telephone interviews lasted for approximately 5 to 8 minutes, and a total of three call attempts were made with those learners who could not be reached immediately.

**Phase 2**

The second phase of the study consisted of 14 FGDs in Gauteng, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga provinces in June 2014. These settings were urban, peri-urban, and rural, respectively. The rationale for selecting these three provinces was twofold. First, these were the three out of nine provinces that trained the highest numbers of CCGs during the first two years of the Thogomelo project. Second, it was also anticipated that these provinces, being distinctly different by geographical location, culture, and socioeconomic characteristics, would offer the opportunity to explore what, if any, impact the varying contexts might have on the career pathing of the learners.

Thogomelo project members collaborated on the design of a FGD guide (Appendix 3) that included questions to explore the degree of learner choice in the decision to participate in Thogomelo training; motivations for participating in the training and the extent of deliberate career pathing; reasons for undertaking further training and choice of training; the role of accreditation in training-related decisions; personal, organizational, and contextual enablers and hindrances with regard to further training; and opinions about what should be done to help caregivers access more training in general. The tool was adapted after field testing in Gauteng several weeks before the field work. Before each FGD, study team members obtained individual informed consent from each participating FGD participant (Appendix 4).
PATH staff provided a three-day training for study team members who would be conducting the FGDs, including an overview of the project, ethical considerations, a detailed review of the consent process and focus group guide, FGD management, a mock FGD held with CCGs in Soweto, note-taking and a participatory review of notes taken at the mock FGD, the data management standard operating procedure, field process expectations, and logistics. The data collection tools were also field-tested during the mock FGD, and as a result minor edits were made to some questions in the FGD guide.

One field team, composed of a focus group facilitator, a note-taker, and an observer, was assigned to each province based on language skills. The focus group facilitators included Thogomelo project staff and two independent consultants, note-takers included one Thogomelo project staff member and one independent consultant, and observers included one Thogomelo project staff and one HWSETA staff member. All FGDs were carried out in the local language appropriate to the area. All focus groups were tape-recorded with consent, and tapes were transcribed into English.

Study plans called for field teams to conduct 18 FGDs in total (six in each province) with the following groups of learners:

<table>
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<th>Focus group discussion subsets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. All year 1 and 2 learners, ages 18–29 (x3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. All year 1 and 2 learners, ages 30–44 (x3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. All year 1 and 2 learners, ages 18–29, 30–44, and 45–60 (x3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All year 1 and 2 learners, all ages, with a level of education below grade 9 prior to Thogomelo training (x3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. All year 1 and 2 learners who were supervisors at the time of the Thogomelo training (x3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. All year 1 and 2 learners who were paraprofessionals at the time of the Thogomelo training (x3)</td>
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The provincial DSD offices supported field activities by organizing the venue where the FGDs were held, and helping communicate with participants on the ground to gather the required number on specific dates. A variety of practical challenges prevented the organization of FGDs with participants exactly as planned. Among other things, participants were grouped by age (younger vs. older CCGs) in Gauteng, as per the protocol, but the groups were mixed in Mpumalanga and Limpopo due to a communication breakdown. The following paragraphs identify group characteristics and other information about the FGDs as they occurred in each province.

**Limpopo:** A total of 37 participants participated in four FGDs held in four districts of Limpopo province (Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, and Waterberg) June 9–13, 2014. Of the 37 participants, 34 were female and 3 were male. It had been initially planned that FGDs would be held in all five districts of the province; however, due to logistical challenges, the fifth group from Sekhukhune district was canceled.

The duration of the discussions was approximately one hour, and the facilitation in three districts was conducted in Sepedi, the local language. Since none of the facilitators could speak Venda, facilitation in Vhembe was done mostly in English and then translated by a DSD representative into Venda. This
language barrier created a limitation in the engagement between facilitators and the group because the participants were not comfortable communicating in English. By comparison, there was a notable difference in the increased level of participation in the other districts, where there was no language barrier.

The selection of all learners was correct, except in Vhembe, where there were two people who had not attended the Thogomelo training. The participants had attended the FGD in place of the two people who were trained on Thogomelo. Most of the participants are still working as CCGs and were trained on the Thogomelo Psychosocial Support Skills Development Programme during 2008 and 2009. They had all completed their portfolios of evidence. However, none of the participants had received their certificate yet.

The logistics in all the districts were well managed by the district DSD offices, even though some of the participants reported only receiving the invitations the day before the FGD. The discussions started late because the participants had to travel long distances although they were all in the same district.

**Gauteng:** All five of the FGDs in Gauteng were held at the DSD offices in Johannesburg. All the group sessions were attended by participants according to the selection criteria, expect for one learner who was not on the register but who informed the team that she did attend the Thogomelo Psychosocial Support Skills and Development Programme. In total, there were 29 participants in the five FGDs, of whom 3 were males and the rest female. Learners who participated in the sessions came from the City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and City of Tshwane districts. Most learners were still continuing with their work as CCGs. Although the learners expressed some frustrations about being CCGs, they still maintained that they love and enjoy the work they are doing in their organizations and in their communities. One major challenge that the research team experienced during the FGDs was the late arrival of the learners. Three FGD sessions started late because the research team had to wait for the learners who were still on their way to DSD offices. Many learners were unfamiliar with the location of the DSD offices, which caused delays.

**Mpumalanga:** Across five FGDs held in the province, there were 43 participants in total, including 42 females and 1 male, with an age range of 25 to 64 years. All participants still practiced as CCGs, with the exception of two, who had changed their careers (to finance and insurance), with the majority of participants working as project managers, coordinators, or supervisors in their organizations. The participants traveled an average distance of 120 km to the FGD venue, and all were from the Gert Sibande and Nkangala districts. Overall, most participants in each of the five FGDs seemed to know each other, as they had attended the Thogomelo training sessions and DSD meetings together most of the time. They were asked to sit next to people they did not know to ensure that they would engage equally with the rest of the focus group participants. All participants had graduated from the Psychosocial Support Skills training in either 2011 or 2012, while a few had also completed the Child Protection training offered through Thogomelo. Only a few participants mentioned that they were still waiting for their certificates. Overall, the groups were very participatory, with good engagement among participants. The majority of participants arrived on time, with the exception of the first group, which began two hours late. There were no significantly dominant individuals who controlled the discussions, thanks to the FGD moderator’s skills in engaging everyone.
Each study team produced both focus group notes (notes that were taken by the note-taker during the focus group) and focus group summaries (written by the team leader) to summarize the results from each focus group and start to identify key themes. In addition, each team leader produced a brief provincial report synthesizing the information collected across the various focus groups in that province. These data sources were analyzed by two members of the study team, one who had been to the field during data collection and one who had not. The approach used for generating the results presented in this report is identified by Saldaña as “theming the data.” Saldaña describes a theme as “a phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means” (Saldaña 2009). Referencing Boyatzis, Saldaña further explains that themes may emerge from the data at a “manifest” level (i.e., that can be directly seen from the information collected) or at the “latent” level (i.e., that is not directly expressed in the data but may be underlying the phenomenon). The study team themed the data by reading all available data sources and creating codes to identify themes that emerged from the focus group participants’ responses to various questions. After an initial reading of the data, the two study team members conferred about the themes and codes they had identified and then finalized a list of codes with which to re-review the data and summarize the results.

5. Key findings

This section of the report presents the key findings of both phase 1 and phase 2 of the study. Phase 1 results focus on the subsequent accredited and non-accredited trainings undertaken by learners in each of the provinces. This provides a succinct overview of what is happening after Thogomelo in terms of the learners’ training experiences that are captured through the HWSETA mechanism, and more specifically the results answer the question of how many learners continue with other courses (and which ones) and how many do not. Phase 2 results focus on the how and why aspects of learners’ further training experiences.

Phase 1

Are Thogomelo learners participating in further training after Thogomelo?

The learner tracking tool described above was used to collect the information about Thogomelo learners from years 1 and 2, presented in Table 1 below. First, one sees that not all Thogomelo learners are included in the HWSETA database. The HWSETA database depends on the uploading of learner credit information from the organizations that have provided the information. The difference in the number of learners in the three provinces (475 in total according to Thogomelo project records) and the number in the HWSETA database (in the “yes” column under “Record on HWSETA database”) is therefore likely due in large part to HWSETA not receiving full information from those organizations. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that other information presented about year 1 and 2 learners in Table 1 is based on what was available to the study team through the existing HWSETA records and may not reflect the experience of the full population of learners. Rather, information obtained from the HWSETA database reflects the experience of 65.5% of learners in Limpopo (131/200), 84% of learners in Mpumalanga (99/118), and 62% of learners in Gauteng (98/157).
Table 1. Summary number of year 1 and year 2 Thogomelo learners’ training information in the HWSETA database.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>475 learners</th>
<th>Record on HWSETA database</th>
<th>Among the learners on the HWSETA database, were the learners…</th>
<th>…linked to Thogomelo?</th>
<th>…registered for other unit standards?</th>
<th>…linked to any other program?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>200 learners</td>
<td></td>
<td>131</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>118 learners</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>157 learners</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>326</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the records for learners whose information is available, the database indicates that 32% in Limpopo (42/131), 19% in Mpumalanga (19/99), and 12% in Gauteng (12/98) were registered for other unit standards.

The majority of all learners were in the 30–44 age group. The difference between the number of learners in the middle age group, compared to younger and older learners, was most pronounced in Limpopo, as seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Total number of learners per age group, per province.**

Using the full listing of 475 individuals who had participated in Thogomelo trainings according to the project database, the study team was able to find contact information for 442 of them. The team could not trace the contact details of 33 learners in Gauteng because the training service provider that had trained them had since closed down. The distribution of learners whom the study team attempted to reach by phone is presented by province in Figure 2.
In total, the study team was able to speak with 131 of the 442 learners for whom they had contact information. The number of learners reached, relative to the number of learners in the database, was lower in Gauteng and Limpopo, in particular. There were different reasons that resulted in the inability to reach learners by telephone. First, more than two years had passed since the learners had attended the training for year 1 and 2 curricula. In the three provinces some learners were not available because their contact details had changed and some of the phone numbers on file now belonged to other people. Some learners moved to other provinces because of change in their career path or other reasons. In some instances the training service provider organizations that trained the learners were no longer in existence and/or some learners were no longer working in these organizations. In addition, in Gauteng and Limpopo in particular, a number of learners were deceased.

Among the learners whom the study staff were able to contact, the majority said they had done further training after Thogomelo, as highlighted in Table 1 and the province-specific figures below in Table 2. This ranged from 64% in Gauteng to 74% in Limpopo to 97% in Mpumalanga. Notably, as earlier described, study staff were only able to speak by phone with a limited number of learners (see Table 2 below, last column). There is no indication that the resulting sample is not representative of the overall group of learners in the HWSETA database, but results should be interpreted in this context.

### Table 2. Proportion of learners with/without further training after Thogomelo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Further training</th>
<th>No further training</th>
<th>Learners interviewed by telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>71/200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>59/124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>31/118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 3, 4, and 5 show the proportion of learners with and without further training after Thogomelo in Limpopo, Gauteng, and Mpumalanga provinces, respectively.
Figure 3. Proportion of learners with/without further training after Thogomelo in Limpopo.

Learners who received further training and those who did not receive further training in Limpopo

- Learners who received accredited and non-accredited training: 74%
- Learners who did not receive further training: 26%

Figure 4. Proportion of learners with/without further training after Thogomelo in Gauteng.

Learners who received further training and those who did not receive further training in Gauteng

- Learners that received accredited and non-accredited training: 64%
- Learners who did not receive further training: 36%

Figure 5. Proportion of learners with/without further training after Thogomelo in Mpumalanga.

Learners who received further training and those who did not receive further training in Mpumalanga

- Learners who received accredited and non-accredited training: 97%
- Learners who did not receive further training: 3%
During the telephone interviews, relatively few learners indicated that they were no longer practicing as CCGs. Several indicated that they were currently working in project management or CBO coordination (and may have been taking Thogomelo trainings as supervisors rather than CCGs), while relatively few were either unemployed or working in a different field altogether. Those who were not still working as CCGs said this was because they did not have good relationships with their managers, they decided to leave their organizations, or they were otherwise still waiting for work opportunities in other organizations. Table 3 lists the current employment status of those learners who were not working as CCGs at the time of the telephone interview.

Table 3. Current employment status among those learners who were not community caregivers at the time of the telephone interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limpopo</th>
<th>Mpumalanga</th>
<th>Gauteng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board member at CBO (1)</td>
<td>Coordinator (1)</td>
<td>Project managers (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinators at CBO (6)</td>
<td>Project managers (4)</td>
<td>Project administrator (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project managers at CBO (9)</td>
<td>Counselor (1)</td>
<td>School administrator (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager at a drop-in center (1)</td>
<td>Teaching (1)</td>
<td>Child and youth care worker (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running a business (1)</td>
<td>Studying (1)</td>
<td>Call center agent (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying (1)</td>
<td>Unemployed (3)</td>
<td>Domestic worker (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic worker (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doing a learnership (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church caretaker (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer at a crèche (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver (school transport) (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer at a clinic (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling food at school (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Working at another job (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant staff (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 and Figures 3, 4, and 5 above indicate that most Thogomelo learners for whom information was available, especially in Mpumalanga, did pursue some form of training after Thogomelo. It is also important to note that, of these, some caregivers took further accredited trainings, some took non-accredited trainings, and some took both. Figure 6 below shows that more often than not learners pursued accredited training. (Note: Learners who took a combination of accredited and non-accredited trainings are included in both categories.) The sequence or timing of the trainings that each learner has taken could not be easily verified by the team because the HWSETA database records reflect the Thogomelo assessment date, and not the start and end date of the training itself. It is therefore difficult to place other trainings within the context of when the Thogomelo training occurred. Therefore, the information about accredited trainings that any learner has taken is held on the HWSETA database, but it was not possible to ascertain whether the trainings were done before or after Thogomelo training. Non-accredited training is not recorded on the HWSETA database, and therefore information about these trainings was self-reported by the learners during the telephone survey.
Figure 6. Percentage of learners who participated in accredited vs. non-accredited trainings, among those learners who pursued any training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Accredited Trainings</th>
<th>Non-accredited Trainings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng Province</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga Province</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo Province</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2

Findings from Phase 2 are presented under major themes identified under the Methods section. For each key theme, the specific questions addressed, codes, and main observations are provided.

Motivations and underlying expectations for participating in the Thogomelo training

To help understand learners’ decisions about whether to participate in Thogomelo training, the FGD guide included questions about how learners had heard about Thogomelo and the reasons why they decided to do the training. This included probes about whether and how learners thought that the training would help them, what kinds of careers they had envisioned, and whether they thought Thogomelo had helped them in any way toward those careers. As described below, FGD participants had very similar responses regarding how they learned about Thogomelo, a variety of career goals, a mix of both “passive” and “proactive” motivations for doing the training, and clear expectations of what they would get from the training, specifically a uniform expectation of getting different or better jobs.

Information about Thogomelo: How did learners find out about the training?

The majority of learners across the focus groups indicated that they had learned about Thogomelo from the DSD, either directly or through the organizations with which they are associated. Some learners heard about the training directly from DSD Community Development Practitioners or Coordinators, one person learned of it through the National Youth Development Agency, and one person was chosen at the drop-in center where she works, but overall there was little variation across provinces or age groups in the way that learners found out about the training opportunity. It was either through the DSD directly or through their organizations’ management, which in turn had been informed by the DSD.
Passive and proactive motivations: Why did learners decide to participate in Thogomelo training?

The reasons learners provided for participating in the training clustered around a combination of passive and proactive motivations. At a practical level, many learners talked about training as an opportunity that presented itself, for free, and that they took advantage of, or were told to attend by a supervisor. In other words, a passive motivation was a reason that depended mainly on factors outside of the individual, rather than a personal desire to attend the training. In some cases, the organization told specific CCGs that they should go to the training because they had seniority, for example, or had not benefited from previous training opportunities, and/or because the training was free. Overall, the number of focus group participants who described their reasons for participating in the training through passive references was fairly limited compared to the wide variety of responses that reflected more proactive motivations. However, one sees from other questions in the discussions that cost (i.e., whether or not the learner must pay for a training), information (i.e., whether or not the learner has information that a training is happening, and with sufficient advance notice to participate), and selection (i.e., whether or not a learner is selected from within his/her organization to participate) are all themes that come out very strongly when speaking of enablers and hindrances both for the Thogomelo training and subsequent trainings. These are themes over which learners have fairly limited control. Of these three factors, only cost was also mentioned specifically as a motivation, and this was mentioned only in one focus group (Limpopo, 30–64 age group), in which participants all said they had attended the training because it was being offered free of charge. These themes are further explored under the sections on enablers and hindrances.

Many learners, even if told by their organization to attend training, had strong personal proactive motivations, usually related to being able to do something as a result of the training, such as helping others, being empowered to treat a challenging situation holistically, or gaining skills to do their job more effectively. Most spoke of having these more proactive personal motivations only after becoming aware of the training content. One group of supervisors in Mpumalanga who indicated they had been aware of the Thogomelo content before they went for training said that they had certain job-related expectations as a result, and were quite motivated by this. However, many learners did not really know much about the training content before they enrolled, and therefore experienced a combination of motivations, sometimes initially passive (e.g., “my organization told me I should go, so I did”) and then more proactive (e.g., “once I learned what it was about, I was motivated by what I could learn”).

Overall, FGD participants spoke in greater detail about the proactive motivations compared to the passive. The proactive motivations most commonly described can be categorized in the following sub-themes:

- Helping others (and to a lesser extent also inspiring others).
- Training content (i.e., practical knowledge that could be applied immediately, specific skills, personal growth, and self-care).
- Connections (with others).
- Career vision.
- Accreditation.
- Post-training job expectations.
Participants across all locations and age groups spoke about the training content as a major motivation, once they had learned what the training was about. A variety of responses indicated that learners saw the value of the course as something related to an immediate gain in a specific knowledge area (coded as “immediate knowledge”) as compared to thinking about how the course would fit into a future career path, although some did speak about a general career vision and how the training supported that vision. Similarly, participants spoke more often about training content than accreditation, although accreditation was also a motivating factor for some. Participants who spoke about the immediate and practical knowledge they thought they would gain described it in the following terms:

- A desire to acquire knowledge in order support communities and help advise families with abused children, especially learning about child protection issues, such as how best to address the needs of children, and how to identify and report neglect.
- An expectation that the training would help them with problem solving, and to develop skills for working with children, families, and the community at large.
- Wanting to upgrade their standard of care and provide improved service; wanting to be certain about what they are doing (job quality).
- A need to know more about caring for individuals who are ill, including skills to help HIV-infected mothers.
- An interest in stress reduction and learning about self-care (especially some who had not previously heard of self-care). Some mentioned that although they did not necessarily think of this going into the training, they were motivated to learn to help themselves in order to help others.
- A desire to learn about psychosocial support. One learner said, “I heard the ‘psycho’ word and I immediately liked Thogomelo and joined, as I had always wanted to study human brains and behavior.” (FGD participant, Mpumalanga)

Much as the participants easily mapped out their personal learning motivations, several, especially in Mpumalanga and Limpopo older age groups (age 30 and above), alluded to the enhanced ability they would have to make connections and interact with other departments and agencies within the referral systems, such as police, social workers, teachers, religious leaders, etc. This seemed to stem from the expectation of gaining both a better understanding of how the referral system is meant to work, as well as the technical knowledge that they needed in order to most effectively interact with the other stakeholder parties within the referral system. Less frequently noted, but related to forging connections with others, some FGD participants, in Gauteng, in particular, were motivated to do the Thogomelo training by knowing it would provide an opportunity to meet other CCGs.

When speaking about the reasons that prompted them to do the Thogomelo training, with probes about career ambitions and whether Thogomelo had helped achieve those ambitions, it is clear that Thogomelo learners are coming to the training with a range of personal ideas about a career direction. However, as an initial motivation for participating in Thogomelo, having a career vision did not come out as explicitly as other factors. A few participants were fairly specific on this question. For example, a participant in a Gauteng FGD (age group 18–29) identified the motivation for attending Thogomelo training being to gain a qualification which was in line with an intended career as a child...
psychologist. A few participants in Mpumalanga FGDs also spoke about topics related to career vision. One participant in the FGD for the age group 40–65 linked this to wanting to lead a hospital in the future, while another in the FGD for the 44–65 age group spoke more generally about being motivated to do the Thogomelo training in order “to pursue a career path.” Overall, however, this theme did not come out as strongly as others described above.

When asked specifically about accreditation as a motivation for participating in the Thogomelo training, there was variation across focus groups. Many participants across all three provinces indicated that accreditation was not a specific motivation for attending Thogomelo. Rather, they focused mainly on the training content and immediate knowledge they would gain, as described above. The reasons for this appear to be twofold. First, many participants did not know what accreditation was prior to the Thogomelo training, unless they had attended other accredited trainings in the past. Second, many participants did not seem to have a specific career vision, with an idea of which trainings and accreditations would be needed, when presented with the Thogomelo training opportunity. Therefore, for many learners in all three provinces, and in particular in Limpopo, the Thogomelo training opportunity was not seen upfront as a stepping stone toward a specific qualification. Some participants in an FGD in Mpumalanga (age group 30–44) also spoke of their own age in relation to accreditation. They explained that they attend courses, even those that are not accredited, because they feel they are getting older and may not have the opportunity to pursue an accreditation in any case. For them, therefore, accreditation was not a specific motivation.

Many learners explained that once accreditation was explained to them during the course, they became more motivated. For example, focus group participants in Gauteng (age group 45–60) expressed that they were not aware that the training was accredited prior to attending the briefing session, but when they learned about this, they were more eager to attend as they knew the certificate would give them access to more opportunities. Similarly, another group in Mpumalanga (age group 30–34) noted that none had been working toward a qualification at the time of the training, and that although they knew about accreditation generally before the training, they learned more about it through Thogomelo. This increased their motivation to finish the training, despite any barriers they might have encountered. Several of the participants in two focus groups in Gauteng and Mpumalanga indicated that they had already taken other accredited training and that accreditation was an important motivation to participate in Thogomelo.

Some focus group participants, especially in Mpumalanga and Limpopo, also said that they were motivated to do Thogomelo training because they expected to get salary increases, promotions, or better paying jobs after completing the training. Most often, these expectations did not materialize. In some cases, the expectations appear over-simplified, and could reflect a lack of information or understanding about how training fits into a larger process of career advancement.

“We had a hope that government will give us jobs.” (MP013, FGD participant, Mpumalanga)

“We were told that with this Thogomelo qualification, you can be employed anywhere.” (MP052, FGD participant, Mpumalanga)

In Limpopo, participants in a focus group (30–34 age group) also spoke about job expectations within the context of hindrances and enablers. Participants in the group, who were all female, had made
significant personal sacrifices during the Thogomelo training based in large part on their hopes for advancement, as summarized in the following field notes:

“[A] majority of people needed someone who would have stayed behind looking after their families and children. All the participants were women and they highlighted the fact that they had school-going kids who needed to be cared for and they had to ask their neighbors and relatives to constantly look after their kids while they were away. One of the participants mentioned that she had a very ill father who needed care. However, she had to leave him all by himself. Another lady mentioned that she had to quit breastfeeding her three-month old baby so that she can attend Thogomelo training. People ultimately managed to do the training as the promise of permanent jobs post-Thogomelo made it possible to leave their families in the care of neighbors.”

Supervisors seemed to have a clearer idea of the expected job-related benefits of Thogomelo, compared to CCGs, most likely because they knew more about the content of the training before it started. Some CCGs had a sense of the benefits of the training (e.g., that this would help them to become social workers), but many also saw limits in achieving without other required qualifications such as a matriculation certificate. They described themselves as resigned to being a CCG, and taking advantage of whatever training is offered to them, rather than having a proactive career vision or direction. In contrast, supervisors, who are also more likely than CCGs to have matriculated, and are further along a career path, seemed to have a better understanding of accreditation, and more often spoke about career path motivations for doing the Thogomelo trainings compared to the CCGs.

Learners’ career vision and perceptions about accreditation

In considering this study’s overall aim of exploring the factors that enable or hinder further training and the career progression of Thogomelo learners and how the project may have influenced their decision to participate, it is helpful to look more closely at career vision and learners’ perceptions about accreditation. The FGD guide included questions related to career vision (what did you always want to become?) and what accreditation is; whether they had known that Thogomelo was an accredited training when they started it, and if so, whether this influenced their decision to participate in Thogomelo training; and whether they had been working toward a qualification at the start of their Thogomelo training, and if so, whether they had taken any other accredited training toward the qualification.

Career vision before Thogomelo

As mentioned above, some described finding themselves in CCG work not necessarily because it is where they wanted to be (e.g., due to limited job opportunities), but have decided to stay where they are in their careers for various reasons. However, a good many are intent on moving forward and have taken previous or subsequent trainings toward careers in a variety of related fields, such that the Thogomelo training, and CCG work in general, is related to a broader career vision. Most learners were thinking about a career, or started out in earlier years thinking about a career, in one area or another, including the following:

- Social work
- Early Childhood Development practice
- Child psychology
- Nursing
What do learners know about accreditation before participating in Thogomelo?

As earlier highlighted, there is tremendous variation in what people understand about accreditation before they begin the Thogomelo training. Although not many of the focus group participants had been working toward a specific qualification before participating in Thogomelo, some did know what accreditation was beforehand. Several FGD participants noted that, although they had an idea about accreditation, they learned more about it once they started the Thogomelo training. In general, those who had heard of accreditation before Thogomelo were those who had undertaken other trainings, especially other accredited trainings, before Thogomelo. As noted above, accreditation was not necessarily a leading factor for deciding to participate in the training, and even if a learner knew what accreditation was beforehand, many other factors weighed more strongly in the decision. The participants also had a mixed understanding of what accreditation means within the context of the qualification system or advancement toward a specific career. As the quotations below indicate, a common perception of accreditation was mainly linked to getting a certificate that is widely recognized. How exactly that certificate fits within the bigger picture of a qualification or career vision was much less frequently mentioned.

Examples of participants’ understanding of accreditation included:

- “You graduate from the training.” (Mpumalanga FGD participant)
- “You get a certificate; certificates are genuine; certificates are recognized; certificates give you job opportunities.” (Limpopo FGD participants)
- “The training is not fake because it is a registered training; it is recognized everywhere.” (Mpumalanga FGD participant)
- “It means the training is in the national database and anyone in your field can access it.” (Gauteng FGD participant)

How much of a motivation is accreditation?

There was variation across focus groups in terms of how large a role accreditation plays in their decision to pursue training. For many learners, accreditation was not a strong motivating factor upfront in deciding whether or not to attend Thogomelo. For other focus group participants, particularly in one focus group in Mpumalanga, accreditation was much more important, and participants said this had highly influenced their decision to attend. As well, even within focus groups there was variation. In one focus group in Limpopo (30–44 age group), while most participants provided other motivations for attending trainings, one participant said that she would not attend a training (in general) unless it is accredited since she would have to invest financially without getting any credits upon completion. Participants in multiple focus groups also said that once they learned Thogomelo was accredited, and/or once they learned what accreditation was, it positively influenced their motivation to “be serious and continue with the Thogomelo training.” The reasons given by some participants for choosing accredited training in general include that after the training they get a certificate with credits, that formal training will help them find work, and that attending accredited
courses will help them develop their career and get employment. For instance, one participant of a focus group in Mpumalanga (age group 44–65) said, “We don’t want to train for nothing,” and received a resounding “yes” from other group participants.

Although accreditation was valued by most participants, many stated that they had also attended non-accredited courses because they felt that the information in these courses would help them in their work or on a personal level. Some learners also mentioned that they had done a lot of accredited training, but they did not know if they had accumulated sufficient credits for a qualification, and if they had, they were unclear about the process of getting a certificate for that qualification.

**What are the enablers or facilitating factors for pursuing additional training after Thogomelo?**

Learners have a variety of motivations for participating in Thogomelo training, as described above. Having the opportunity to act on those motivations depends on a range of enablers that make it possible for CCGs to actually do the training. The focus group participants identified several such factors clustering around the themes of support from family, colleagues, and the community, as well as resource availability and characteristics of the training itself. These themes are repeated and expanded in the later discussions about enablers of further training after Thogomelo.

Across the three provinces, focus group participants mentioned that **family support** was important to their being able to participate in Thogomelo. In Mpumalanga and Limpopo, some talked about family members looking after their children while they were away, and in Gauteng one focus group participant (45–60 age group) indicated that her daughter, who was doing social auxiliary work, had looked over her test results with her and advised her on how she could improve. Focus group participants in all three provinces also spoke about the importance of **colleagues’ support** while they were doing the Thogomelo training. For many, this revolved around other CCGs helping with their workload while away. Others described support from colleagues in terms of the motivation and encouragement they received, and getting time off from their supervisors to work on their portfolios. The participants further spoke of the importance of support from colleagues who were also in the Thogomelo training, as in an FGD in Gauteng (45–60 age group) where it was noted that colleagues who were attending the training did debriefing sessions together which increased their knowledge. Some participants also said it was especially helpful if their supervisors were also in the training because they could support them in the assignments, whereas if not, it was sometimes difficult for the supervisor to understand what requirements the learner had to meet. Some participants also identified **community support** as an important enabler to do the Thogomelo training, both in terms of encouragement from others in their community when they learned about the training, and in terms of being able to do assignments that could require engaging with various actors in the community. One learner in Limpopo (37–64 age group) spoke about the support she received from the tribal office in her community, recounting that when she discussed the training with the Induna (local leader), he called community meetings to let people know and encourage their involvement and support.

Focus group participants identified a variety of **resources** that enabled them to do the Thogomelo training. In particular, the fact that they did not have to pay for the training was an obvious enabler. As well, several participants specified support for travel costs, accommodation, and meals as important to their ability to participate in the training. One participant noted that employers also
provided indirect support by allowing CCGs to make photocopies at work. Comments about these types of resources as enabling factors emanated from Mpumalanga and Gauteng, but not Limpopo.

In Mpumalanga, focus group participants also spoke about the characteristics of the training experience itself and the ways that this enabled them to successfully participate in Thogomelo. The comments came mainly from participants in the 30–44 age groups, who said that the facilitators had good facilitation skills and were open to being asked questions after hours. Some also spoke about the importance of having group assignments that allowed learners to study together and help each other.

What types of additional training do Thogomelo learners do?

The learners who have done further training have done a mixture of both accredited and non-accredited trainings. Table 4 highlights the variety of other trainings completed after Thogomelo. Most of the trainings that the focus group participants have done, especially the accredited trainings, are in line with career pathways that are linked to community caregiving for orphans and vulnerable children.

Table 4: Types of further trainings undertaken by Thogomelo learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accredited trainings</th>
<th>Unknown/non-accredited trainings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate in Ancillary Health Care</td>
<td>Ward committee governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work</td>
<td>Business startup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental Ancillary Health Care</td>
<td>Breastfeeding counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Certificate in Community Health Work</td>
<td>Budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and Youth Care Work</td>
<td>Personal selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community health worker training</td>
<td>Self-management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillary health care</td>
<td>Medical and dental office administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>HIV/voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Auxiliary Work (other)</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
<td>Generic management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer management</td>
<td>First aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are the enablers or facilitating factors for pursuing additional training after Thogomelo?

The motivations for learners to take courses after Thogomelo largely reflect specific enablers, since for many participants there is no practical application of motivation without opportunity and enabling factors. Learners mentioned a wide variety of factors that they said helped make it possible for them to undertake trainings after Thogomelo, many of which were similar to the enablers identified for the
Thogomelo training itself. These clustered around factors at four levels—(1) individual, (2) family, (3) organization, and (4) environment—as summarized in Figure 7 and further detailed below.

Figure 7. Enabling factors that help learners to participate in Thogomelo and other trainings.

### Individual

**Self-motivation.** Self-motivation was an important factor for participants to continue and finish further training, especially as reported by focus group participants in Mpumalanga and Limpopo. One focus group participant in Mpumalanga explained, “Self-motivation plays a major role—it counts a lot,” while others in the Mpumalanga 44–65 age group indicated related personal aspects, such as patience and enthusiasm, as the main enabling factors. Participants in Limpopo (30–53 age group) spoke about their willingness to work extra hours, which relies on self-motivation, while focus group participants in Mpumalanga (40–65 age group) and Limpopo (37–64 age group) also spoke about the desire to increase their knowledge and skills as a motivation-related enabler to do further training. As well, participants in the 30–44 age group in Mpumalanga said they would not attend courses in which the content was something they had already learned. Their self-motivation therefore stemmed in part specifically from gaining new knowledge and skills.

**Personal resources.** Although most focus group participants across the provinces saw the financial subsidization of training as an enabler, some participants paid for additional courses themselves, driven by a great determination to succeed. A younger community caregiver in Gauteng spoke of how she was determined to become a qualified social worker. She said she was saving her R1600 stipend to pay for her studies toward matriculation, and that when she completes this, she will study further
until she achieves her dreams. Participants in one of the Mpumalanga focus groups also reported that
they were so determined to do specific courses that they had searched for the means to pay for them.
However, this can come at a substantial added cost for learners. Some participants, specifically in the
Mpumalanga 30–34 age group, had sometimes borrowed funds from an omashonisa (loan shark), with
a 50% interest rate, to fund their training.

**Initiative to seek new training opportunities.** It is perhaps obvious that a learner needs information
about a training opportunity in order to access it, and lack of information was noted by many focus
group participants as a hindrance (further described below). However, some learners take personal
initiative in seeking out trainings. In one focus group in Limpopo (30–53 age group), one CCG who
heard about HWSETA learnerships on the radio decided to go to the HWSETA office in Polokwane
(170 km from where he lived) in order to get more information. His organization now receives
HWSETA trainings for various management courses directly, and some CCGs have also received
learnerships for Social Auxiliary Work. Although there was only one such example among the various
focus groups, it points to the importance of learners’ personal initiative to find out about trainings as
an enabler to accessing further trainings.

**Prerequisite credits/experience.** Participants in one focus group (Gauteng, 45–60 age group)
identified having the required previous credits and work experience needed to participate in trainings
as an enabler. Although this was not a dominant theme across a large number of focus groups, it
points to a very practical consideration.

**Family**

**Family encouragement and support for child care.** As with the enablers for participating in the
Thogomelo training, focus group participants spoke about the support from family members for child
care as a facilitating factor for being able to participate in further training. This was noted specifically
in focus groups in Mpumalanga and Limpopo. As one participant in Limpopo explained:

“They [family members] looked after the kids at home and encouraged us to go and attend
the training. I think that all of us are going to respond the same way. All of us got support
from home. My husband was looking after the home while I was away.” (Female FGD
participant, Limpopo, 30–64 age group)

Another focus group participant spoke of the supportive role that family members often play in the
learning process:

“Our children and siblings assisted us in getting information that was required for us to
complete our assignments.” (Female FGD participant, Gauteng)

**Organization**

**Selection.** Although the vast majority of references to learner selection (i.e., who is selected for
training and how selection occurs) indicate that participants see selection as a hindrance, some
participants, specifically in two focus groups (one in Mpumalanga, and one in Limpopo) identified it
as an enabler. Those who did indicated that either training was offered to everyone in the organization
and therefore everyone had a fair chance at being selected, or that they were selected because other
colleagues were not available or interested. While it is important to note this perspective, and consider
that selection can work in specific learners’ favor, the majority of focus group participants saw learner selection as a hindrance rather than an enabler.

**Support from colleagues.** Some learners had very supportive managers who, for example, were willing to conduct home visits on behalf of the learners while they were away attending training. Learners also said that while they were away in training their peers in their organizations assisted by taking on their caseloads, and when they returned from training, their peers helped them by being receptive to suggestions for improving their practice that they were able to bring back to their organizations.

**Environment**

**Availability of information.** The availability of information at this level refers to information flow not related to communications at the organizational level, but rather information coming into the organization from outside sources. Although most focus group participants identified the unavailability of information about training, in general, as a hindrance to further training, some participants noted that their organizations routinely received training information. This in turn helps program managers ensure that caregivers hear about opportunities. In this way, some participants considered information flow at this level to be an enabling factor.

**Availability of resources.** Learners have mostly done courses that are free of charge, or that have been subsidized by bursaries and stipends. Learners said that the fact that they did not have to worry about transport and meals during the training helped them to focus on their studies. This was a major enabler for learners who are provided with, or who seek out, subsidized training opportunities.

**What are the hindrances facing Thogomelo learners when trying to pursue additional training?**

Like the enablers, the themes that emerged from the focus group data about hindrances to further training cluster around four levels: (1) individual, (2) family, (3) organization, and (4) environment, as highlighted in Figure 8.
**Figure 8. Hindrances that prevent learners from participating in Thogomelo and other trainings.**

| Environment | • Information flow from outside sources to the organization  
| Organization | • Distances  
| | • Nepotism in job competition  
| Family | • Training info flow within the organization  
| | • Participant selection process  
| | • Supervisor/colleagues not always supportive  
| | • Heavy workload  
| Individual | • Family members are sick  
| | • Home care duties  
| | • Lack of funds  
| | • Lack of qualifying prerequisites  
| | • Age  
| | • Uninterested or reluctant to complete tests  
| | • Learner has personal illness  

**Individual**

**Lack of financial resources.** One major hindrance that most learners in all three provinces spoke about was lack of financial resources and funding to pursue further training. As one participant in Mpumalanga (age group 44–65) said, “You cannot attend training unless you are funded,” while another participant in the same focus group shared that she had wanted to attend an Auxiliary Social Workers Course, but had not been able to afford it. Some participants also mentioned that they sometimes end up consulting *omashonisa* (money lenders) with a 50% interest lending rate in order to fund their training. This is an exorbitant lending rate for CCGs, especially since many receive only a small monthly stipend for their work.

Another focus group participant in Limpopo (30–64 age group) explained the dilemmas at multiple levels that some learners face when considering whether or not they can “afford” to go to another training.

“IT is difficult to attend any further training because we are expected to use our own money for transport which means taking away from the little that our families have and at the end of the day, we have nothing to show for it. We don’t even get certificates for some of the trainings we have attended and this creates problems at home because our husbands don’t believe that we have been to training.” (FGD participant, Limpopo)

Some further explained that with the little stipend money they receive, they prefer prioritizing investing education for their children and grandchildren rather than investing in further training for themselves when they are old and due to retire soon.
Not meeting the entry criteria (prerequisites). Some participants expressed their desire to take further courses, but said they had been hindered by being either over- or underqualified. For some, the requirement of some trainings to have a matriculation certificate was a specific barrier. A participant in Mpumalanga (age group 30–44) emphasized that CCGs need to have passed grade 12 before they could be enrolled in certain courses. In some instances, competence in a specific topic is required. A participant in Mpumalanga (age group 40–65) narrated a case to the group where two CCGs dropped out of the course because the course needed a person who was highly literate in mathematics. Another focus group participant in Mpumalanga (30–44 age group) explained that most courses are offered in English, and that language challenges were a hindrance for some learners. As well, many learners, especially in Limpopo, spoke about not having received their certificates after completing Thogomelo training over two years previously. Participants noted that not having certificates to prove that they had completed an accredited course was problematic because their supervisors sometimes became less inclined to nominate them for further training, because in some cases they need the certificate to apply for other courses, and because it was demotivating to them personally.

Age. Some focus group participants spoke of age requirements creating a hindrance to CCGs who may be too young to qualify for certain trainings based either on chronological age or level of experience. Others spoke of being older as a hindrance (or demotivating factor) because they felt too old to keep up with the trainings or because they thought they would not get very far in their studies, as the quotes below illustrate.

“My brains get tired easily during such trainings because of my old age.” (FGD participant, Mpumalanga).

“We are not young anymore and if it takes 4 years, we will be much older. We would like the course to be something quick and we can learn what we need to learn quickly. We don’t mind a year’s training because we are learning and it is going to end, in comparison to studying towards something which is going to take very long. And we look at our age. When they say we are going to graduate from a long course, we think about how old we will be. We may not even be able to walk at that stage.” (FGD participant, Mpumalanga)

Lack of interest or reluctance to take tests. A few learners said that some CCGs were either uninterested in trainings overall, or that they were reluctant to take trainings that requires exams or tests. One participant in Mpumalanga plainly stated, “Sometimes CCGs just do not want to study.” Another participant also said that some young CCGs were regarded by colleagues as “lazy” with regard to training since sometimes they ignore their project managers when informed about training opportunities.

Personal and health issues. CCGs sometimes experienced unfortunate events in their lives that have hindered them from doing further training, such as accidents, death in the family, and personal illness. These events often stand in their way of pursuing additional trainings. For example, one FGD participant in Mpumalanga experienced poor health and was not able to take advantage of a subsequent training, while another participant’s father passed away, which also disrupted plans to participate in further trainings.
Family

Family obligations/expectations. Some participants shared with the group the personal and family obligations that deterred them from accessing additional training, which included looking after a sick partner and performing household chores. For instance one participant in Mpumalanga had to look after her husband when he broke an arm and said this had made it difficult to continue with training plans at that time. Another participant shared that the divorce of her parents stopped her from studying further and achieving her goals. These were both instances where participants were not going to be able to leave their homes for a long period. There were also strongly motivated CCGs who, facing family-related constraints, still managed to participate in the Thogomelo training. One CCG spoke of feeling guilty and neglectful while at the training because she had left behind an ill family member while spending a lot of time away from home. However, she believed it would be worth the sacrifice in order to take advantage of an accredited training.

Organization

Poor training information flow within the organization. This theme, combined with poor information flow from outside sources to the organization, emerged as one of the most frequently discussed hindrances to further training identified by focus group participants. Focus group participants spoke more frequently about breakdowns in the information flow coming into the organization, but one participant in Mpumalanga indicated that the manager of her organization hides information about trainings, while another said more generally that poor management, lack of leadership, and lack of communication within the organization served as a hindrance to getting information about other trainings. As well, some learners said that they often are given very short notice about trainings, and sometimes they are told on the day of training that they should attend, without any prior preparation and without any knowledge of what the training is about. In some cases, this may be linked to poor internet connections. Lack of internet access directly by CCGs was highlighted as a problem because the information that is sent via e-mail by DSD often takes a while to filter through to them, especially if their managers do not check e-mail frequently. Therefore, they only realize much later that the training dates have passed.

Selection. There emerged from the focus group participants, especially in Gauteng and Limpopo, a picture of training participant selection processes within the CCGs’ organizations that seemed to them to be non-transparent and biased. A focus group participant in Gauteng (18–29 age group) spoke of a Child and Youth Care Worker training for which the DSD had requested the organization to send four people. However, the organization sent only one person, and that individual was not a CCG. Another focus group participant in Gauteng (age group 30–44) said that managers do not inform all staff about training opportunities, but instead speak to specific staff only. Learners expressed a strong desire for more information to come to them straight from the DSD, so that they know what opportunities exist, without a so-called “supervisor filter.” One participant said that managers may think that certain CCGs are over-qualified for a specific training, while other participants mentioned that their work/organization structures do not allow them to go for further training because of their age. While some CCGs felt this was limiting, others also said that they themselves sometimes pass on the training opportunities to younger care givers, as in their opinion the younger caregivers will benefit more from the training:
“We also think for the children when we see opportunities. We think that we have been attending training for a long time and they could also go and learn. These are the younger caregivers we work with.” (FGD participant Mpumalanga)

**Lack of support from managers/colleagues.** Although this theme was not widespread, some learners spoke about their managers being unsupportive. Some said their managers deliberately increased their workload during the time that they had to attend training. At least one participant expressed concern about the possibility of losing the job while away, saying, “My manager told me that if I go for further training, I will lose my job.” Another focus group participant in Mpumalanga (40–65 age group) explained that although she had colleagues to whom she had delegated her CCG responsibilities while she was away for training, she received complaints from children’s families about the services provided. Therefore, not only finding someone to cover the workload while away, but also ensuring that the quality of services does not suffer during the CCG absence, was also identified as a hindrance.

**Heavy workload.** Several focus group participants noted that their job duties and heavy workload made attending trainings challenging. One participant said it was not possible to continue with studies because of reports and campaigns required by the job, while another explained, “It was difficult and hard to work and attend trainings as work is always prioritized” (Limpopo, 37–64 age group), and that this made it difficult to think about further trainings. Another participant mentioned that due to heavy workloads, CCGs are sometimes indirectly forced to attend training on Saturdays, and another said, “I had to work from 7am to 9pm on some days in order to catch up on the work that I had missed whilst attending training and completing my portfolio” (Limpopo, 37–64 age group).

**Environment**

**Lack of information from outside sources to the CCG’s organization.** Much as some focus group participants noted limited information flow within their organizations as a hindrance to further training, many others also spoke about limited information coming into their organizations from outside sources and/or that they were unable to access individually from outside sources. Focus group participants in Gauteng spoke of information coming to their organizations late, when it is already difficult to organize attending, and one participant in Mpumalanga said that they often received incomplete information regarding the name and duration of the training course so that by the time a CCG figures out what the training is about and where to go, it is already toward the end of the course. Participants in both Mpumalanga and Limpopo talked about the additional challenges of being in a rural area. In Limpopo, participants in the 31–47 year age group focus discussion explained that some CCGs have difficulty getting newspapers, where trainings are sometimes advertised. One participants said, “We don’t read newspapers because we can’t afford it,” while another commented, “Newspapers are not easily accessible as we are staying in rural areas and you can only get it when you go to town and also if you don’t have money you will not be able to buy it.”

**Professional environment.** Concern was expressed regarding the perceived nepotism of government officials. CCGs noted that they often participate in the training courses based in part on the hope that they might find permanent jobs afterwards. However, some participants reported that they became “demotivated” after seeing what they perceived as nepotism that hindered their job prospects despite having taken additional trainings.
Geography. FGD participants described geography as a barrier to further training at two levels. First, if transportation costs to a centrally located training venue are not covered by the training services provider or training sponsor, those costs become a disincentive to the learner. Some learners will find the means of covering these and other costs if there is no alternative, but many FGD participants indicated that living far from the training venue was a significant hindrance. At a second level, FGD participants, particularly in Limpopo, indicated that living in a remote area also limits their access to information. As noted earlier, many CCGs do not go to town frequently, which is one of the only opportunities they would have to buy a newspaper where they might otherwise learn about a training. They are therefore dependent on their organizations to get training-related information. As earlier described, there are significant issues in ensuring fair and adequate information at the organizational level, and in remote areas this is compounded by barriers in accessing other potential information sources.

What can be done to address hindrances to further training?

The FGD facilitators asked participants to provide suggestions about how to overcome the hindrances to further training that they had identified. Specifically, participants were asked to speak about what they themselves could do proactively, and what they think DSD, HWSETA, and/or those working in their organization can do to support them in overcoming hindrances to training.

What can learners themselves do to overcome hindrances to further training?

In each of the provinces, focus group participants spoke about a number of inter-related ideas about things they could themselves do to gain access to additional training opportunities, many of which were linked directly or indirectly to information. This appears to be the main theme around which participants thought that they could proactively have an influence at an individual level. Some participants said that CCGs should ask within their organization or ask the DSD directly about upcoming trainings, and also keep track of what trainings they had taken. More specifically, various participants indicated that:

- It is a learner’s responsibility to first check which credits they have and what additional credits are needed.
- CCGs should ask more questions and clarify uncertainties within the organization about training opportunities.
- CCGs should speak directly to supervisors or managers and ask about trainings.
- CCGs should find out about training-related information coming into the organization.
- CCGs should seek information about trainings outside of their organization.
- CCGs need to identify and communicate their training needs to relevant authorities, including DSD.

Focus group participants also spoke of more indirect ways for CCGs to learn about training opportunities, bring forward their own ideas, and share information with others, as highlighted by the following suggestions:
• CCGs should get involved in the big picture within the organization (e.g., get involved in the development of the organization’s annual plan; get involved with budgeting so that one can learn what the organization has budgeted for staff development).

• CCGs should ask more questions about why certain decisions are made within the organization.

• CCGs should make suggestions for improvement, in the hope that the managers will eventually take their ideas into consideration.

• CCGs should network and participate in campaigns held in other districts to aid the flow of information about trainings and other opportunities.

• CCGs should share information about opportunities with each other.

• CCGs could combine their limited resources and find courses together that they can attend and pay for as a group in order to reduce costs; they could also look for opportunities from other departments in addition to DSD.

Beyond these information-related suggestions, some participants also pointed to the need for CCGs to have strong self-motivation, including putting more effort into what they are doing and being more willing to attend additional training even if they will need to write tests or do assignments. One participant noted simply that CCGs must overcome any negativity that may come from their managers or colleagues, and continue to pursue their own dreams.

While the focus group participants came up with an impressive list of things they can themselves do to overcome hindrances to further training, as many or more ideas were generated about things that can be done by others, including their organizations, DSD, and HWSETA. These ideas clustered around the following themes that are further detailed below:

• Training needs assessment
• Information flow
• Training selection process
• Colleagues
• Resources
• Certificates

Training needs assessment

Participants in three Limpopo focus groups and two Mpumalanga focus groups indicated either HWSETA, DSD, and/or their organizations should do a training needs assessment or skills audit of the CCGs in their organizations. A focus group participant in Limpopo (31–47 age group) suggested that organizations should have a staff development plan and arrange training that will benefit the organization. Another participant in Mpumalanga (30–44 age group) said that when preparing monthly reports, CCGs should include their own training needs. This would be more of a self-assessment of training needs.

Information flow

As noted above, multiple focus group participants identified ways in which CCGs themselves could proactively seek information about further training programs. Many across the three provinces also spoke of the need for others—especially DSD, as well as HWSETA, and the organizations for which
they work—to enhance information flow. Specific suggestions from participants included the following:

- Organizations should communicate with all staff about training opportunities as soon as management receives the information.

- DSD should spread information more widely about upcoming trainings well in advance, and share with all organizations their training plans and schedules.

- DSD should get the learners’ contact information (in a database) and follow up with them directly about other trainings (commonly noted suggestion); it was also suggested that the DSD send information to CCGs via the municipality.

- HWSETA should contact directly those CCGs who have attended HWSETA-funded and accredited training when future opportunities arise.

- DSD should widely distribute information about bursaries and scholarships.

- Trainings should be advertised through radio and television in order to reach more people.

**Trainee selection process**

As noted earlier, several focus group participants noted that the selection of CCGs for training opportunities seemed biased or non-transparent. When asked what can be done to address hindrances, many participants, especially in Gauteng, but also Limpopo and Mpumalanga, offered further views on this theme, as follows:

- Employers (organizations) should address decision-making about learner selection and the timely flow of information.

- Organizations should only select people who work for the organization to go to training.

- CCGs should take turns to attend training.

- When DSD requests a certain number and cadre of learners for a training, managers should respond according to those guidelines, rather than sending individuals who are their favorites.

- Employers (organizations) should allow the CCGs to themselves decide if they want to participate in a training.

- DSD should select the learners for training (commonly suggested), and track which organizations and CCGs have benefited from training to ensure that opportunities are provided widely across organizations and individuals.

- DSD should develop a database with all learner information so as to contact them directly for training opportunities.

- DSD should provide learners with their contact information so that they are able to liaise directly with the DSD about training opportunities.

- DSD should increase the annual target number of learners.

- DSD should increase the age limit for CCGs who are able to attend the training.
A manager from Limpopo described the challenges faced by managers when asked to select learners for training. He said that there are more CCGs that require training than there are spaces available through DSD-subsidized training. They, as managers, are often not given clear selection criteria and, as a result, the selection process may seem unfair to the CCGs who are not selected. He also explained that not all CBOs get information about trainings from DSD. One recommendation would be to post an open advert to all organizations to which learners can respond individually if they are motivated to do so. This can help eliminate learner selection hindrances, and also ensure that learners who attend training are doing so not only because they are selected by their managers, and may feel obliged to attend.

**Colleagues**

Although many focus group participants spoke about the support they received from colleagues during Thogomelo and other trainings as enabling them to complete courses, some did not have this experience, and many suggested finding ways to encourage colleagues’ support in order to address some of the hindrances to further training. Focus group participants in Gauteng and Mpumalanga spoke of the importance of moral support, indicating for example that employers and other staff should support CCGs, and that CCGs should “love each other” when working, and “console and support each other during difficult times.” Another participant recommended that dynamics among CCGs should be improved with support from managers and other colleagues, and that problems such as arguments about seniority should not be allowed to fester. In these ways, some focus group participants linked positive camaraderie and collegial support to finding solutions to training hindrances, including learner selection workload sharing. Participants in Mpumalanga (30–34 age group) also noted that they needed more time off for training, or at least flexible work times, and job security so that they do not fear losing their jobs if they go for training.

**Resources**

Across all three provinces, focus group participants noted the importance of financial support for trainings. Some said that DSD should provide transportation funds, while others indicated support was also needed as food and accommodation. Some participants thought this support should come more directly from the organizations, while others said HWSETA should be involved either by funding CCGs trainings directly or by coordinating with the Department of Labour. In addition to funding, focus group participants also identified access to the internet as a resource they need both in order to do their training assignments, and to learn about other training opportunities.

**Certificates**

In at least one focus group in each province, one or more participants mentioned the need for either HWSETA or DSD to ensure that learners receive training certificates upon completion of all requirements. They saw this as important, in order to have something to show for their efforts, and as an encouragement for CCGs to pursue further training.
6. Conclusions

Across the two phases of this assessment, there were a variety of findings addressing the objectives of each phase. The main findings are summarized in the following paragraphs.

A significant percentage of learners’ details were not available on the HWSETA database. This is likely due in large part to training service providers not uploading the necessary records to HWSETA’s database. While it is beyond the scope of this study to fully assess why this is the case, or how it should be remedied, results from the first phase must be considered in this light. Equally if not more important, learners who have completed the Thogomelo modules without it being reflected in the database are not served well by the accreditation system. If learners’ credits are not reflected in the database, they do not fully benefit from the investment they have made in completing the training, and may become unmotivated to pursue additional training opportunities toward a qualification.

Many of the learners who the study team was able to interview by the telephone survey indicated that they had taken other trainings (74% in Limpopo, 64% in Gauteng, and 97% in Mpumalanga), many of which were accredited.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to ascertain whether other accredited and non-accredited training had occurred before or after Thogomelo because the telephone survey was designed to verify information in the database, which in turn is not designed in a manner that allows for a complete chronology of trainings. Nevertheless, one can conclude from the available information that many Thogomelo learners have either already taken other accredited trainings, or later do so. In general, focus group participants spoke very highly of the Thogomelo training and described various ways in which they have personally gained from having attended the training.

Due to the small numbers of learners who were reached during the telephone interviews and subsequent FGDs, we cannot make any conclusions about whether being in a rural, peri-urban, or urban province has any influence on whether learners continue with trainings after Thogomelo toward a qualification; however, it was evident that information flow from DSD to the CCGs was very slow in the rural areas compared to urban areas. Additionally it cannot be said conclusively that the level of education at the start of Thogomelo training had any bearing on whether learners go on to do further training. However, there was an indication that FGD participants who were supervisors and coordinators had a clearer understanding of what accreditation means, compared to focus group participants who were CCGs. Although the sample of learners reached had a very small representation of the younger age group (18–29), we can say that the older CCGs 45 years and above may have had more altruistic reasons for not pursuing further training (e.g., they would rather focus their limited resources on their children’s education and/or ensure that younger CCGs also have training opportunities).

Results from both the first and second phases show that learners are engaged in a variety of training topics, but career ambitions for most participants revolved around social work. Results from phase 2 also indicate that although many learners had some understanding about what accreditation is, the majority do not have a clear idea of the accreditation process or pathway to achieve their career vision. For focus group participants who did have a better understanding of accreditation, many indicated that accreditation is a significant consideration when thinking about further training.
However, decisions about any given training were often opportunity-based, and learners encountered a number of enablers and hindrances that influenced whether they were positioned to take advantage of any other opportunities. This is in contrast to a scenario where a learner knows upfront which trainings are needed for a specific qualification, can easily recognize the trainings when offered or proactively seek them out, and can deliberately tick off the list of requirements until the qualification is attained. The focus group participants consistently identified training content as their main motivation for having done the Thogomelo training, specifically the immediate knowledge and skills that they would get from the training. This was more frequently mentioned compared to accreditation. Other motivations mentioned by focus group participants referred a desire to help others and specifically to upgrade their level of care, to increase their networks, and to work more effectively with other stakeholders addressing the needs of orphans and vulnerable children.

While accreditation was not the main motivating factor for many of the focus group participants, many did speak about the importance of getting a certificate as a result of the training, and the expectation that they would get better jobs and/or salary increases as a result. Because job promotion and salary increases are typically dependent on a variety of factors in addition to trainings received, the assessment did not specifically seek to determine whether learners received salary increases, promotions, or new jobs after the Thogomelo training. However, given that many learners who participated in the FGDs spoke of this as a remaining expectation, it seems many have not yet experienced these advancements.

Enablers and hindrances to further training emerged at four main levels: (1) the individual, (2) the family, (3) the organization, and (4) the environment. Enablers that emerged most strongly from the focus groups included self-motivation, support and encouragement from family, access to training information within and outside the organization, being selected for trainings, funding availability, having time to do assignments, and the willingness of colleagues to help carry the workload while training. Key hindrances to further training included lack of funds and course prerequisites; personal issues such as illness, accident, or family needs; barriers to getting information about trainings from both within and outside the organization; training participant selection processes that appear non-transparent and biased; and heavy workloads.

The focus group participants suggested a number of ways in which both they and others (i.e., their organizations, DSD, and HWSETA) can take actions to ensure that CCGs are able to pursue further trainings. In terms of what CCGs themselves can do to overcome hindrances to further training, the majority spoke of ways to directly and indirectly gain better access to information about the trainings. In addition to proactively asking about trainings within the organization and asking DSD directly, several CCGs focused on ensuring positive interpersonal dynamics among colleagues within their organizations as a means of ensuring good information flow. The focus group participants’ suggestions for actions that others can take to support CCGs in continuing training relate principally to ensuring training needs assessments are done, finding ways to address training information gaps, and ensuring training participant selection is fair. Many participants would like to see DSD take responsibility for selecting training participants and/or have more direct access to the DSD in order to find out about trainings. Participants also spoke about the need to ensure that trainings are funded, and noted the importance of organization leadership and helping colleagues create a supportive work environment that allows CCGs to participate in trainings. Finally, CCGs are motivated to do trainings
in part by receiving a certificate at the end, and several focus group participants re-iterated that HWSETA and DSD need to ensure learners are issued their certificates when they have fulfilled all requirements.

7. Recommendations

Based on the results presented, the following recommendations are offered to stakeholders to strengthen support to CCGs in pursuing further training:

1. Ensure that training participants understand that getting a certificate in Thogomelo training or any accredited training is valuable and can help them gain the skills and knowledge required for obtaining certain jobs, such as social auxiliary work, but that the certificate alone does not guarantee a job or a better job. This will help avoid creating unrealistic expectations among learners about the training with regard to specific jobs and advancement.

2. Create tailored guidance to help CCGs obtain a clear vision of what path they can take toward a qualification. This includes explaining to CCGs at large (not only those who go for a specific training) both what accreditation is, as well as the details of the qualification process, which specific courses are required and what other requirements must be met, and what support is available to CCGs to navigate through the process, including funding opportunities.

3. Ensure that the credits that Thogomelo learners (and others) have earned for accredited trainings are accurately reflected in the HWSETA database, and that there is a mechanism by which learners can easily determine whether they have sufficient credits toward a specific qualification.

4. Create clear, systematic, effective communication about training opportunities for CCGs through information channels that they can access directly.

5. Ensure more transparent selection processes for specific training spots. Older and younger CCGs experience many hindrances to training and accreditation in common, but older CCGs expressed additional concerns that should be taken into account during the selection process, including the extent to which they themselves believe they can complete the training and benefit from it.

6. Provide subsidized or free training within a clear career pathway that learners can take toward a specific qualification.
8. Bibliography


## Appendix 1: The Learner Tracking Tool

Information for the first four columns of this tool was recorded from the Thogomelo Project database and then tracked to the HWSETA database to verify whether the learner and their record was on the HWSETA database (fifth column), whether or not it is recorded in the HWSETA database that the learner had done one or more Thogomelo unit standards (sixth column), whether or not the learner had registered for any other unit standards aside from Thogomelo, and whether or not the learner was linked or registered to any other programme than Thogomelo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Number</th>
<th>Name of Training Service Provider</th>
<th>Year of Training</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Record on HWSETA database (Y/N)</th>
<th>Learner linked to Thogomelo (Y/N)</th>
<th>Registered for other unit standards (Y/N)</th>
<th>Linked to other programme (Y/N)</th>
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Appendix 2: Telephone Survey Tool

THE TRACKING OF OCCUPATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THOGOMELO LEARNERS STUDY

Short telephone survey for selection of learners for participation in focus group discussions

Date: __________
Time: __________
Telephone Call ID #: __________

Introduction: Good morning/Good afternoon. My name is__________. I am calling you on behalf of researchers from PATH, Health Development Africa (HDA), and International HIV/AIDS Alliance (IHAA) who are leading this study with support from the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) and the Department of Social Development (DSD).

Purpose: We are conducting a study to track the learners that were trained in the Thogomelo curriculum at least two years after they completed training. We are doing this study to find out why some learners have taken on further studies towards a qualification and why others have not. The information we learn in this study will be used to inform the Thogomelo project.

The research will be done by conducting focus group discussions with a number of Thogomelo learners. Because we would like to obtain information from those who are of the required age to participate in research, and meet other characteristics that would best inform the study, I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you would be eligible to participate in the research. You do not have to answer these questions. If through these questions we find that you are eligible to participate in the study, you also do not have to do so. It is your choice to participate and you can stop me at any point. Your answers in this exercise will not affect the services that you will receive. Do you have any questions? Are you happy to continue? Yes/No

Questions:

1. Are you still a Community Caregiver? Yes/No
   a. If No, what are you doing now? ________________________________
   b. What were your reasons for leaving caregiving?
      i. __________
      ii. __________
      iii. __________ Other: _____________________________

2. The HWSETA records show that you have completed the following unit standards accredited training courses: _____, _____, _____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>X Credits</th>
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a. Is this correct?
b. Are there any additional accredited training courses that are not on this list? Yes/No
   i. If yes, what are those additional courses? ______________________

3. Since the Thogomelo training, have you done any unaccredited training? Yes/No
   a. If Yes, what course? ________________________________

4. Are there any reasons why you have/have not taken further courses? Yes/No
   i. _________
   ii. _________
   iii. _________ Other: ________________________________

5. Are you willing to participate in a focus group discussion with other learners who have/have not taken
   on any further studies after Thogomelo? Yes/No. If yes, we will contact you shortly to arrange a
   suitable date and time for you to attend the Focus Group Discussion.

Thank you for your participation.
Appendix 3: Topic Guide for Focus Group Discussions

Project Title: Tracking of Occupational Development of Thogomelo Learners Study

Topic Guide for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

This topic guide is intended to provide moderators of FGDs with a series of questions to ask participants. This topic guide should be pre-tested prior to administration with a small group of participants similar in characteristics to those who will participate in the FGDs. Include an introduction icebreaker.

Icebreaker to initiate interaction. Explores degree of learner choice in decision to participate in training.

1. Tell me how you found out about the Thogomelo training.
   Probing questions:
   o Did anyone tell you about Thogomelo?
   o How were you selected/chosen for training?
   o Tell me about whether you had a choice to attend Thogomelo.

2. Tell me about some of the reasons that made you want to do the Thogomelo training.
   Probing questions:
   o How did you think that Thogomelo would help you in any way?
   o What did you always want to become?
   o Did Thogomelo help you in any way to achieve this?
   Addresses motivation for training, awareness of career pathing.

3. What does accredited training mean?
   Probing questions:
   o At the start of Thogomelo did you know that Thogomelo was accredited?
   o In what way did your awareness/understanding of accredited training influence your decision to participate?
   o At the start of Thogomelo, what qualification (if at all) were you working towards? And after Thogomelo?
   o Did you do any other training before Thogomelo towards a qualification?
   Explores whether learners started training with a qualification or occupational direction in mind

4. What additional training (s) have you done since the Thogomelo training, and was it accredited?

5. What influences CCG’s choice of training content? Direction of training (i.e., it would contribute to a specific career path)? Theme of the training?
6. **Were there any reasons why you chose to do further training, or not?** What helped you make your choice?

*Probes: Did any of the following factors influence CCG decisions about further training?*
- Topic/content of the training?
- Training was accredited?
- Length of the training?
- Cost of the training?
- Availability of training opportunities?

*Explores reasons for undertaking further training, and choice if course(s) selected*

7. **Gender—How does being a man or a woman shape decisions to do further training?**
- How does being a man or woman influence your decision to do further training?

8. **What made it possible for you to do this training? (enablers)**

*Probing questions:*
- Who motivated/encouraged you to do the training?
- How did you pay for the training? What role did cost play?
- What benefits were provided by your organisation?
- Whilst on training what kind of help did you need and receive, and from whom? (other than financial, e.g. job share, child care, time off work, travel costs)

*Explores personal, managerial, organisational, contextual enablers*

9. **Tell me about some of the things that made it difficult or stopped you from doing more training? (hindrances)**

*Probing questions:*
- What challenges came up in the decision-making process?
- What factors played a role in your not being able to do further training?
- Yourself—what personal challenges did you experience?
- Your supervisor/manger?
- Your organisation?
- Resources—money, time, transport?
- Length of training?
- Availability of information?
- Understanding of the accreditation process?
- Entry requirements? (insufficient credits)
- The level of information or orientation you received from DSD? Training service provider? Organisation?

*Explores personal, managerial, organisational deterrents*

10. **What are some of the things that would have helped you overcome these challenges?**

*Probing questions:*
What would you have needed to do?
What would you have needed from your supervisor?
What would you have needed from your organisation?
What resources did you need?
What else would have helped (enabled) you to do more training?

Explores learner identified needs, solutions and enablers

11. What should be done to help caregivers to get more training generally?

Probing questions:
What should caregivers do?
What should employers do?
What should the Department of Social Development (DSD) do?
What should the HWSETA (Health and Welfare Sector and Training Authority) do?
Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form for Focus Group Discussions

The Tracking of Occupational Development of Thogomelo Learners Study

Research Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATH INVESTIGATORS</th>
<th>PARTNER INVESTIGATORS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator: Dr Elizabeth Rowley (PATH)</td>
<td>Co-Investigators:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Investigator: Yolanda Moyo (PATH)</td>
<td>Naomi Hill (HDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rita Muyambo (International HIV/AIDS Alliance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sikhumbuzo Gcabshe (HWSETA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are asking you to be in a research study

Researchers from PATH, Health Development Africa (HDA), and International HIV/AIDS Alliance (IHAA) are leading the tracking of occupational study with support from the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) and the Department of Social Development (DSD). The research team wants to talk with learners who received Thogomelo Training at least 2 years ago. We are asking you to be in this study because you received Thogomelo training at least 2 years ago. This study involves sharing the reasons why you have taken further training towards a qualification or why you have not taken further courses. This form will help me explain what this study is about and what will happen if you choose to be in it. After I explain the study, I will answer any questions you have. Then you can decide if you want to be in the study or not.

What we are trying to learn in this study

The purpose of the study is to find out a) What further training learners have undergone after completion of the Thogomelo Skills Development Programmes and b) why some learners have taken on further training and others have not. The information we learn in this study will be used to inform the Thogomelo project. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand or if you want more information. We hope to enroll 144 participants in total.

Will this study help you or others?

Being in this research study may help you personally. The benefits to you are that you will have an opportunity to share your experiences of how Thogomelo has influenced your work and career development. The greater benefit is that your experiences will help inform the project in the future.

What we are asking you to do

For this study, we are asking you to talk in a group of 6 to 8 other Thogomelo learners. This kind of group discussion is called a focus group. A member of our research team will lead the discussion with assistance from 1 to 2 other team members.
The focus group will last about 2 hours. The group will be asked a number of questions by the focus group discussion leader about their occupational development after Thogomelo training.

Important things to know about the focus group

- **We will ask all members of the group not to use names when they talk.** We will also ask that no one talk with other people about who was in the group or what was discussed. Even though we ask this of everyone, we cannot promise that all group members will keep your name and your comments private.

- **We will tape record the discussion** so we can listen to it later and write down what was said. If you do not want to be recorded, you should not be in this study.

- **You may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed by parts of the discussion.** You do not have to talk if you do not want to. You may choose not to answer any question you may be asked. You may also leave the group at any time.

Steps we take to protect your privacy

- We will keep everything you say confidential and use it only for research. This means we will not use anything you say against you or talk about it with other people. The only other people who may look at our records are people who review studies to make sure they are safe and protect your rights. This could include members of the Research Ethics Committee and employees of the agency that pays for this study. These people are not allowed to share private study information with anyone else.

- We will store the tapes and paper records in a locked cabinet where only the research team can access them. Study records stored on computers will be protected by a password that only the research team knows. We will keep the tapes until the discussion has been written down. We will erase the tapes as soon as possible after that. The paper and computer records do not include your name. We will keep the paper and computer records for 5 years after the study ends.

- We will keep your name private. We will not say your name during the focus group or include it when we write down what was said. Study reports will never include names or other personal information about the people who were in the focus groups.

- We will only have one list that includes your name and how to contact you. We will keep this list in a locked file cabinet and in a secure computer file where only the research team can access it. We will destroy this list with names 1 year after the study is completed.

What you will get as a thank you for your help

To thank you for helping with this research, we will provide refreshments at the end of the focus group discussion and your transport expenses to the venue will be reimbursed. Transport reimbursements will be up to a maximum of R200 only.

Information about your rights

- **You do not have to be in this research study.** If you say no, you will not lose any rights that you normally have. If you say yes, you will not gain any rights that you did not have before.
• **You may say yes now and change your mind later.** If you choose to join the focus group, you may leave at any time.

**Who to contact if you have questions**

If you have any questions in relation to this project or your participation please contact Yolanda Moyo, PATH, Rosebank, 1st Floor Craddock Avenue. Tel: 011 447 1641

Any further questions about your rights in connection with this project can be referred to Naomi Hill, HDA. Tel: 087 310 5000

**Confirmation of consent**

Study participant

Signing your name below means you choose to be in this research study. It also means you have asked any questions you want to ask. You will get a copy of this form to keep.

Printed name_______________________

Date______________________________

__________________________________________

Signature of Participant

Do you agree to be tape recorded during the focus group?    Yes    No

Member of research team

Signing my name below means I have explained this research study to you and answered your questions to the best of my ability. I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

___________________________________________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

_______________

Date