

## Chapter 2

# Adult Basic Education Provision and Human Capital Development Perceptions of Adult Educators

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter raises an argument as to whether provision of adult basic education in the Eastern Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa can lead to bigger issues in the form of developing human capital which, in turn, will lead to inclusion of those once marginalised and excluded in the economic activities of South Africa. The main research question—To what extent does adult basic education and training (ABET) provision contribute to human capital development?—was pursued to probe the perceptions of educators in ABET centres and those in the education districts. A survey design, underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, was used in this investigation, employing qualitative research method. One hundred and five (105) educators in the ABET centres and six (6) in the district offices participated in the study. The educators in ABET centres and those in district offices were purposefully selected. Data collection took place through questionnaires and interviews. The qualitative data were transcribed word for word for purposes of tracing any observable themes.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Human capital development is part of human development which is usually determined by using a human development index. According to Harber (2010) the human development index is a composite measurement based on indicators such as life expectancy, adult literacy, proportions of enrolment in the different levels of education and the gross domestic product (GDP). Many people view human capital development as a function of the human resource division in big firms. Yet, the concept embraces opening the eyes of a person who could not read labels on medical containers, on food shelves in supermarkets and road signs to be able to read them and thus gain his or her freedom. This chapter follows the angle of human capital development as imparting people with new skills such that their livelihoods are improved. This is in the backdrop of Statistics South Africa's report of 2019 that approximately 18 million South Africans are vulnerable to poverty, or they are in need of state support.

## **BACKGROUND**

Chikwe, Ogidi and Nwachukwa (2015:44) state that human capital is the stock of competencies, knowledge and personality attributes embodied in the ability to perform to produce economic value. It is attributes gained by an individual through education and experience. This chapter takes adult basic education provision as associated with human capital development beyond reading, writing and arithmetic but to be an enabler to trainability and helping people to acquire low and high order skills. In fact, Mongale and Masipa (2019:273) cite Ogundari and Awukuse (2018) who in their study concluded that the two measures of human capital, health and education have effects on economic growth, although the contribution of health is relatively larger than the impact of education. The focus of the chapter is to discover the experiences of educators in relation to adult basic education and training provision and human capital development in the Eastern Cape.

Eastern Cape is one of the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa created after the 1994 democratic elections. It consists of six District Municipalities, namely, Cacadu, Amatole, Chris Hani, uKhahlamba (now known as Joe Gqabi), O.R. Tambo and Alfred Nzo (Eastern Cape State of the Environment Report, 2004). There are also two Metropolitan Municipalities, namely, Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay. According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (2004: 1), in collaboration with Whiteford (2004), approximately 57% of individuals in South Africa live below the poverty income line. HSRC (2004) further highlights that Limpopo and the Eastern Cape have the highest proportion of the poor, with 77%

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