

MUNICIPAL WORKERS RETIREMENT FUNDS WORKSHOPS | CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), 41% of Social Security grants are spent on elderly people. The current value of the Old Age Pension is R1720 per month¹, and can therefore not adequately support a comfortable lifestyle after retirement². Against this backdrop, the Financial Sector Conduct Authority's (FSCA) Consumer Education Department (CED) identified the need to conduct consumer financial education workshops for members of pension or provident funds in three Gauteng Metropolitan municipalities in order to encourage retirement planning and preservation.

The Municipal Workers Retirement Funds Workshops targeted the following municipalities: City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane and the City of Ekurhuleni. The project intended to reach approximately 2500 workers through 50 workshops consisting of 50 beneficiaries each.

The purpose of the evaluation conducted by Genesis Analytics was to assess the implementation of the project and the degree to which the project contributed to improving financial knowledge and participants' understanding of the importance of saving for retirement and preservation. The evaluation provided feedback on the successes of the project as well as recommendations on how the project design, implementation and outcome on beneficiaries can be improved in future.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Municipal Workers Retirement Funds Workshops was conceptualised in 2016 and was designed to be implemented in three mines: Sibanya Gold, South Deep and Harmony Gold. Unfortunately, after the initial discussions, it was not possible to secure commitment from the three mines. For this reason, the target group of the project was changed to municipal workers.



The Municipal Workers Retirement Funds Workshops aimed to:

- Raise awareness around retirement planning and the benefits of preservation
- Raise awareness on how to read and comprehend a benefit statement
- Outline the complaints handling procedure and recourse options



An external service provider was appointed to facilitate the workshops across the three targeted municipalities. The workshops commenced in August 2018 and were concluded in October 2018. The implementation of workshops within each of the municipalities was adjusted during the project based on the changing needs and availability on the ground resulting in:

- 8 workshops in Johannesburg
- 12 workshops in Tshwane
- 30 workshops in Ekurhuleni

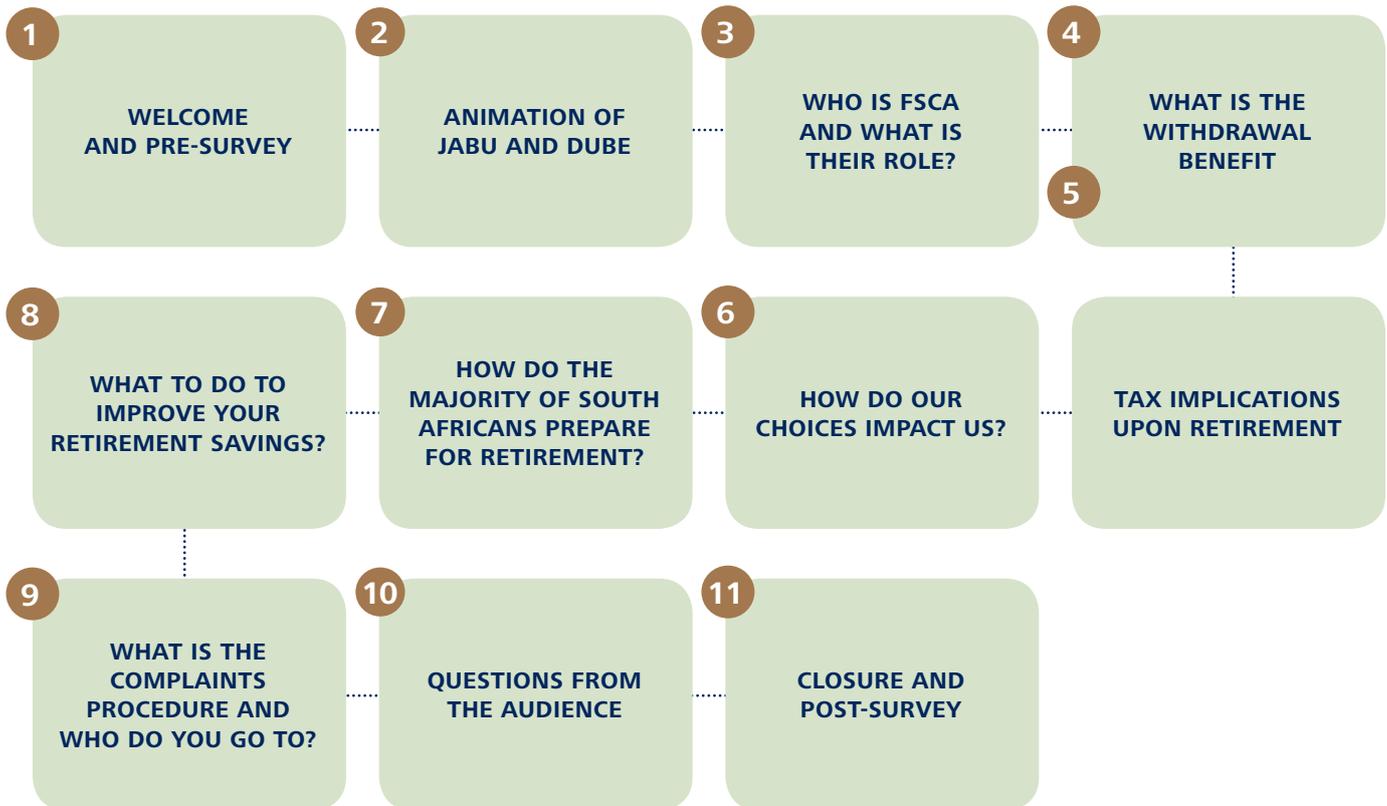


The overall target for participants was 2500, based on the assumption that there should be 50 participants for 50 workshops. **The total reach achieved was 2265.**

¹ www.gov.co.za/services/social-benefits-retirement-and-old-age/old-age-pension

² <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=7756>

THE CONTENT INCLUDED IN THE MUNICIPAL WORKERS RETIREMENT FUNDS WORKSHOPS IS DEPICTED BY THE GRAPHIC BELOW:



Each workshop was scheduled for an hour and at the end of the workshop the facilitators distributed FSCA branded promotional material (lunch bags with a small healthy snack).

APPROACH TO MONITORING & EVALUATION

The programme’s theory of change was formulated by the evaluation team and approved by the FSCA. The theory of change depicts the logic (or theory) underpinning the project by identifying the project activities. The latter is utilised to show how they lead to immediate outputs, and showing how these, in turn, inform future outcomes and affect impact objectives in the long-term. **The intended impact of the Municipal Workers Retirement Funds Workshops was to support employees with valuable knowledge to improve how they plan their finances ahead of retirement.**

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

In conducting the monitoring and evaluation for the Municipal Workers Retirement Funds Workshops, data was collected during various programme phases, using different methodologies. This is illustrated in the figure below:

FIGURE 1: Overview of the methodology employed by the evaluation team



The successes and lessons learned that are presented below are based on the data collected via these methods.

SUCCESSSES

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- The relationship between FSCA, the service provider and the municipalities was generally good. As always, with project implementation there are some challenges but effort was made to engage with all the appropriate people to ensure that these difficulties were overcome effectively and with minimal delay.
- Effort was made to collaborate with the individual municipalities to understand when the most suitable and convenient time would be to schedule the workshops. This was also informed by the responsiveness of the participants.

As a service provider... they were very hands on. We didn't have to follow-up. Where we did find difficulties with the project, they worked with us to make it succeed. The relationship was very positive. KII, FSCA



CONTENT AND MODE OF DELIVERY

- **During observations it was clear that the content was relevant to the participants.** They were engaged, asking appropriate questions and were keen to learn more. During the follow-up calls, **over 93% of participants indicated that they had found the information shared in the workshops valuable.**
- The Jabu and Dube animation was an effective way to 1) Ensure participant attention (audio visual), 2) Introduce the topics which would be covered in the workshop and 3) Emphasise the importance of preparing sufficiently for retirement. **This mode of delivery was creative and connected with the majority of participants.**

For me, the use of the cartoon was very relevant. It sparked interest. It raised questions in your mind: which guy do you want to be.

KII, FSCA



It made you think about the future, that Jabu guy and his friend.

Follow-Up Call; Female;
25 - 35 years; Joburg



I think in terms of the animation, it helped a lot. It was a picture and (ideal) mindset.

KII, Service Provider



- Trainers were successfully **allocated to different municipalities based on their language skills** to maximise comprehension. This worked extremely well and helped reduce the impact of any language barriers as much as possible.
- The workshop content and facilitation were two components which were extremely well implemented and appreciated by the participants. 69% of the sample rated the workshop as excellent, 21% as good. The same was true for the rating of the facilitator where 68% rated the facilitator as excellent, and 24% rated them as good.



LESSONS LEARNT

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- While the FSCA and service provider were actively engaged with the municipalities, **it was still difficult to secure the agreed dates and scheduled times**. This resulted in last minute changes.
- The network used to complete the SMS survey was not stable which resulted in participants being disconnected requiring them to restart the survey. There were also literacy issues observed which influenced municipal workers ability to complete the SMS survey across all three municipalities. The **lack of technological know-how and low literacy rates** amongst the participants also delayed the completion of the pre-workshop survey which had a knock-on delay on the actual content of the workshop.
- Availability of appropriate venues for the workshops varied significantly** – these were particularly hard to secure in Ekurhuleni. While it is beneficial to ensure the training occurs at the work place – in some cases – especially at depots this was not appropriate.
- Attendance at the workshop was not mandatory. As a result, **participation numbers were in large part dependent on the extent to which the information was effectively communicated** which varied significantly.
- Overall, while the content of the workshops was appreciated, based on data triangulated from multiple sources including the beneficiaries, the service provider and the FSCA, **more time would be appreciated for similar workshops** going forward.

There were lots of delays caused by poor planning within the municipality that caused workshops to not start on time.

KII, Municipality Representative



FROM THE BENEFICIARY PERSPECTIVE

- While there were challenges with the pre- and post- SMS survey data, limiting the degree it could be utilised, the evaluation team did analyse a small sample of this data. The results were **overwhelmingly positive illustrating the change in knowledge** specifically related to understanding who the FSCA is, the content of the benefit statement and lastly whether or not one should preserve one's retirement benefits.
- Over 51% of the overall sample** responded that they needed to increase their savings plan to be able to support themselves during their retirement.
- When asked if participants would **change their spending habits, overall 78% said yes** - 82% of the beneficiaries in Ekurhuleni would like to change, 74% in Tshwane and 65% in Johannesburg.





GOING FORWARD

PROGRAMME LOGISTICS

- The quality of contact information collected through the registers was a challenge. An electronic capturing method (to remove hand writing) or a data capturer on site would help improve this.
- The quality of venues varied. In Ekurhuleni, these were particularly ill-suited to the workshop implementation. In future, if the workshops are run in those type of facilities an alternative mode of delivery would be beneficial. Otherwise, more appropriate venues need to be sourced for this type of workshop.
- While the intention of the SMS survey was good, there were implementation challenges on the ground. In future, alternative means of capturing feedback such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) may be more appropriate with participants with this level of literacy and technical know-how (most applicable in Ekurhuleni). This would, however, require workers to receive additional time to participate in these sessions, which could be a challenge.
- Not knowing the precise numbers (or more accurate estimations) of each of the workshops scheduled presented challenges in terms of preparing the food packs, and ensuring the venues had adequate spacing. In future roll-outs of the project, it may be helpful to seek more commitment in terms of specific numbers from the municipalities.
- The communication within the municipalities varied significantly. This meant that different degrees of information was shared with the participants ahead of the workshops. Similarly, attendance at the workshops was not compulsory. This may have improved the numbers at each of the workshops and the extent to which the participants engaged with the content.

IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Poor retirement planning is a key issue amongst municipal workers. Repeat workshops to address further questions would be a valuable way to improve the sustainable impact of this type of project.
- As illustrated by feedback from some of the older participants, in some cases it is not within their power to significantly change their position. This highlights a need for this content to be included in the employee induction process. The FSCA may find value in exploring this opportunity with other municipalities.



Prepared By

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