

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATED SKILLS OUT-REACH PROGRAMME (ISOP) IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Integrated skills outreach (ISOP) was a programme launched with the aim of empowering youth with technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills so that they can be gainfully employed and take part in national economy. The programme was implemented in all provinces in Zimbabwe. In Midlands Province, Gweru Polytechnic trained eighty (80) youths from Shurugwi district in various trades under Intergraded Outreach Programme. This study sought to assess the impact of training youths in the district. A methodological triangulation approach to research was carried out to assess the impact of the programme. Purposively sampled community leaders and youths were interviewed in order to generate data to assess how the youth and the community benefited from the programme. Questionnaires were distributed to twenty (20) randomly sampled ISO graduates who were equipped with technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills through the (ISOP) programme. Observations were carried out in the communities to assess the projects carried out by youths in the communities. Focus group discussions with members of Shurugwi rural community were held to assess the community views on the programme. The Results showed that skills acquired from the programme helped the youths be actively involved in income generating projects. However, because of unavailability of market for their products and resources for their projects, the youths moved to urban centres where resources and demand for their products are available. The study recommended that the youths should be assisted to acquire requisite resources to carry out projects in their home areas in order to curb rural urban migration.

Keywords: Technical and Vocational Skills, Entrepreneurial, Integrated skills outreach programme.