



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

**EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS (EHW)
EVALUATION REPORT**

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1. Executive summary

The Departmental Evaluation Plan 2020-2024 as signed by the HoD and MEC directs to the evaluation of the EHW programme. This evaluation is mainly focussing on the implementation of the programme hence titled as “**Implementation Evaluation of the EHW in the Limpopo Department of Education**”. However, some of the reasons for the evaluation include the need to understand the extent to which the programme is utilised/accessed and juxtapose such with the absenteeism experience in the sector.

The evaluation nature needed to follow the techniques of qualitative research methodology as some question seek to dig deeper to the impact. However, due to the nature of the programme, that it deals with private matters, the evaluation is too much of quantitative nature where questionnaire is used and data is electronically analysed through google form mechanism. Participants were randomly sampled permanent employees of Limpopo Education department according to SMS, administrators, office-based educators, school-based educators and general workers categories across all institutions of the sector (Head office, district, circuit and schools).

Amongst the finding is that over 60.5% of the participants know about the programme but only 34% happen to be users of the programme among which only 7.9% utilize it most frequently (3-5 time or more) in a month. Only one pillar (physical exercises) is utilized far more than the other pillars of this programme. As majority of participants is based in schools (62.4%), this finding suggests that EHW may not be reaching schools perhaps due to lack of dedicated personnel in districts and circuit offices or schools themselves. This is increased by sporting activities in many schools where only a sport teacher participates instead of all employees. For those in the Head Office and districts, it can be argued that during Wednesdays, time allocated for the programme is either being used by some employees for other personal matters or such hours not being observed for the intended purpose. The prioritization of this evaluation by SMS categories of participants, especially at districts and circuit levels also suggests that supervisors perceive EHW programme less serious hence only 5 out of 32 participated in this study. So, it is unlikely possible for employees to utilize this programme if supervisors do not view it necessary.

The available data confirms only 16% of absenteeism rate in the sector which is caused by EHW related challenges such as unhygienic working space, poor working conditions, relationship matters, financial problems and work overload. Therefore, the relationship between absenteeism and underutilization of EHW is not confirmed in the study.

There is also another 16.6% of employees that advance ill-health as their reason for not coming to work. This is attributed to legal/approved leave of absence. It would be expected the same to be seeing a need to access and utilize medical screening and psychosocial services pillar of EHW that can assist in ill-health related matter. However, this evaluation reveals only 5% that utilizes this pillar. This scenario also confirms less accessibility of EHW services. It can also be argued here that there could be reasons for shying away from these services.

In conclusion, many participants agree that there is a need for further awareness of the programme and capacitation on it. They support the fact that it needs to be extended to districts, circuits, and schools to make it known and accessible. This may also call for the revival of schools' extra-mural activities where all employees do participate instead of only sport delegated staff member. It is worth agreeing that activities such as athletics, soccer, traditional dances etc contribute to improving the health status of a human body and therefore promote its well-beingness. It may be advisable for institutions of education to prioritize the provision of days and times for such activities to strengthen their implementation.

2. Introduction

This report introduces the finding of the EHW full scale evaluation. The evaluation was aimed at finding out the extent of EHW utilization and its relation to the suspicious high rate of absenteeism in the sector. It also intended to find out the implementation strengths and gaps of the programme as well as suggestions, recommendations, or opinions on how to best improve the EHW implementation across the sector.

2.1 Background and context of EHW

The advent of globalization and transformation facing the economy and workplace in South Africa has seen organizations faced with increasing complexity of work such as downsizing, restructuring and change in the organization of work. With the pressures of having to perform in an ever-changing working environment, employers must deal with employees who find it uneasy to cope under such conditions. These employees are seen with stress, trauma, depression, low morale and decrease in outputs. Shalnaaz Bismilla & Kerry Gantley (2018) agrees that work environment has changed and it is not easy to get employees working stress free. Most likely some of these challenges might lead to substance abuse, or psychosocial problems at home.

The HIV and AIDS pandemic is another employee health related matter that negatively affects productivity at the workplaces. As alluded in the HIV/AIDS Technical Assistance Guidelines of Department of Labour (ISBN No: 0-621-336566-4), HIV/AIDS comes with absenteeism, sick leaves, and faster staff turnover due to early death, disability pension and lower morale.

Among consequences of employee health challenges resulting from stress, trauma, depression and low morale; mostly employees absent themselves from work, apply for ill-health retirement or even at worse situation such as death. Table 1 below shows Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) five years trend on service termination due to ill-health and death.

Year	Number of employees	Number of terminations	Number of ill-health	Number of deaths
2003	61 191	22		78
2004	64 649	14		79
2005	65 588	100		270
2006	61 168	131		298
2007	62 698	21		369

Table 1: Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) five years trend on service termination due to ill-health and death. Source: Human Resource Management review: June 2008

All these consequences have direct negative impact to individual productivity, and ultimate poor organizational performance. It is this condition that warranted an intervention that will improve the mental health and wellbeing of employees to promote and maintaining sustainable levels of their engagement, resilience in the face of organisational change, motivation and innovation. The Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) became an option to fulfil this goal in the LDoE.

The Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) is a work site-based program designed to assist in the early identification and resolution of ill-health status of employees, which results in performance and behavioural problems; emanating from either personal and/or work- related concerns. It is an organized program consisting of four pillars, which are, (a) individual wellness (physical), (b) Individual wellness (Psychosocial), (c) Organizational wellness and (d) work life balance. It was instituted in the LDoE in 2008. However, there is a suspicious low rate of utilization of this programme, which requires a deeper investigation.

While an under-utilization of EHW programme is suspected, the department is suspected to rate high with absenteeism among employees, see Table 2 below, and with consequent unsatisfactory departmental performance recorded in table 3.

Year	School principals	School-based Educators	Office-based educators	SMSs	Office based educators	General workers
2021						
2020						
2019						
2018						
2017						

Treasury is still sourcing the data, as requested by our HR

Table 2. Rate of absenteeism per employee cohort per year. (HRM is still collecting data).

YEAR	12 % PASS RATE
2017	65.6
2018	69.4
2019	73.2
2020	68.2
2021	66.7

Table 3. Percentage of NSC results for the past five years (2017-2021) in the LDoE, as a performance yardstick of the sector.

The scenario above where there is unsatisfactory departmental performance is normal for every organization to worry hence an evaluation on the implementation of EHW which could contribute by reducing a suspected high absenteeism rate in the sector. The EHW evaluation aims to investigate the extent of the utilisation of its programme by employees for the purpose of reducing suspected absenteeism in order to improve service delivery in the sector. This is because the employee absenteeism negatively affects the performance of the department. In many instances, factors that are found to influence high absenteeism rate among employees include poor organisational structure (subjecting employees to functions relevant to more than one official), improper work climate, poor leadership and communication processes, absence of sensible employment policies, poor supervision and managers' passiveness. These conditions all lead to employees' stress, depression, and other ill-health problems.

2.2 Purpose, scope and focus of this evaluation.

The aim of this evaluation was to investigate the extent of the utilisation of EHW programme by employees for the purpose of reducing absenteeism to improve service delivery. This evaluation also provides evidence that the department will use to take informed decision in improving the implementation of EHW programme where gaps are identified and improve on pockets of best practices identified.

This full-scale evaluation was carried out in Limpopo province across ten education districts, twenty circuits, hundred schools and in education provincial office. Categories of permanent employees across these institutions were represented as planned, except where a sampled institution does not have such a category employee. E.g. A school without a general worker and/or an administration office.

2.3 Evaluation questions

This evaluation intended to find answers to the following questions:

- To what extent do employees utilize EHW programme in the Limpopo department of education?
- Is there any relationship between the extent of the utilization of EHW programme and the rate of employees' absenteeism?

- How are the four pillars of EHW programme being implemented in the department?

3. Evaluation work plan and progress to date

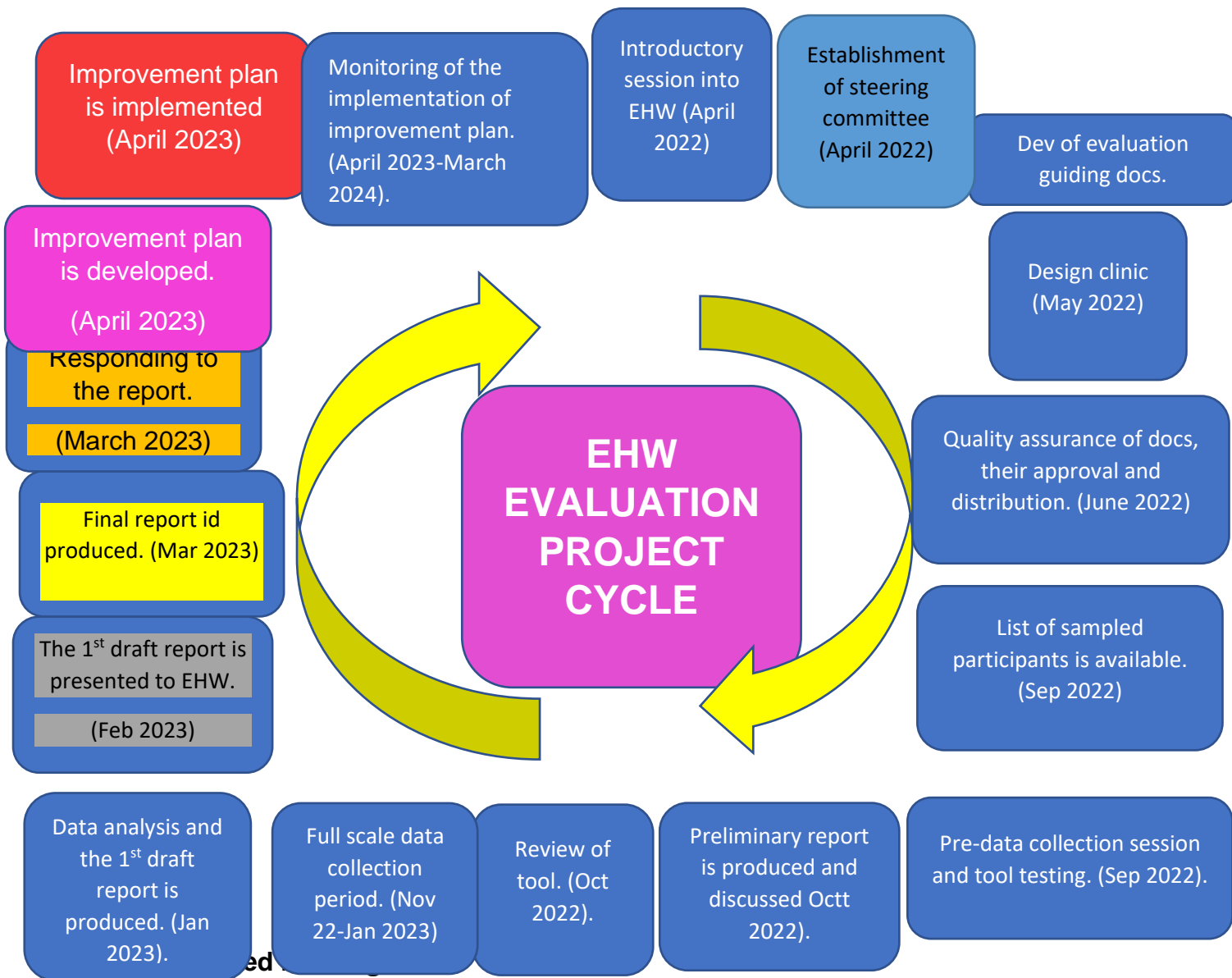
The list below indicates activities that were attained during the implementation of this evaluation.

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Progress made
1	Introductory session into EHW.	IM&E	Done
2	Establishment of steering committee	EHW & IM&E	Done
3	Design clinic session.	EHW & IME	Done
4	Evaluation guiding documents: Strategy/proposal, ToR, project plan, data collection instruments and letter of concern for respondents are developed.	Kekana L & Steering committee	Done
5	Quality assurance of all developed guiding documents.	IM&E & Steering committee	Done
6	Evaluation guiding documents are finalised and approved.	Kekana L & DDG Corporate services.	Done
7	Distribution of evaluation plan to steering committee and IM&E.	Dr. Rasila BN	Done
8	List of sampled participants to respond to questionnaires is available.	Ramphele F	Done
9	Pre-data collection session and tool testing.	IM&E	Done
10	Preliminary report is produced and discussed for the input into tools' review	IM&E & Steering committee	Done
11	Review of tools	IM&E	Done
12	Full scale data collection	IM&E	done
13	Data analysis and 1 st draft report is produced.	IM&E	done
14	The 1 st draft report is presented to EHW	IM&E	To take place beginning of 2023/4
15	The final report is produced.	IM&E	April 2023

16	Responding to the report	EHW	April 2023
17	Improvement plan is developed.	EHW	May 2023
18	Improvement plan is implemented	EHW	2023/4 financial year
19	Implementation of the improvement plan is monitored.	IM&E	From Q3 of 2023/4

Table 4: Evaluation plan.

3.1 Project plan



During planning stage, it was agreed that, scheduled meetings will take place based upon completion of certain tasks or milestones, though emergency meetings would be allowed, and be convened upon any crisis that would be viewed as potential threats to hinder the success of evaluation. However, throughout the evaluation project implementation there was never a crisis or challenges that threatened the success of the project, so as a result there was never an emergency meeting. The table below, reflects the meetings that were held, specified completed tasks that informed such a need, the purpose of each meeting as well as expected participants for each meeting.

Completed tasks	Duration of the meeting	Purpose of the meeting	Expected participants
The green meetings did take place with success, while pink ones are still outstanding.			
Presentation to kick-start the evaluation project for EHW.	Half a day	To introduce the evaluation, its intentions, and benefits, as well as what is required to initiate the project. (Introductory meeting to the programme owner).	EHW head office personnel.
Steering committee is established.	2 days	To design the guidelines to drive a way and how of the evaluation project implementation.	Steering committee & IM&E
Evaluation proposal, Project plan, ToR, data collection tools and letter of consent are available.	2 days	Quality assurance. To get the team throughout documents, so that they can edit them. To plan together, tool testing.	Steering committee & IM&E
Pre-data collection briefing sessions are done, testing of data	2 days	To reflect on findings of tools testing, as well as review it where necessary.	Steering committee, & IM&E

collection instruments is done.			
Full scale data collection, data analysis and interpretation are done, and 1st draft report is available.	2 days	To read through the whole report and give input. To draft a feedback response. To identify areas that need improvement and develop an improvement plan.	Steering committee, IM&E

Table 5: Completed tasks, held meetings, purpose and expected participants.

4. Methodology

4.1. Evaluation approach/ design used.

This evaluation applied mixed methods of research as planned, that is, both quantitative and qualitative methods. It was quantitative (close-ended) as its questionnaire was comprised mostly of questions with options of responses, from which participants chose. The google form automatically used numbers and percentages on pie graphs to present objectivity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:21) Its qualitative nature (open-ended) was reflected as participants responded to questions that drew feelings, attitudes, and thought/opinions regarding the EHW implementation strengths, gaps, and recommendations for improvement.

4.2. Sampling

Head office, district offices, circuit offices and schools remained strata from which participants came. Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS) applied its technical expertise to randomly sample these strata as well as participants according to the full-scale evaluation sampling guide (Table 6 below), where all categories of employees were represented.

Sites		Participants												
Head Office (113 Biccard, 33 Biccard, Renmeester and Mastec)	SMS	2												
	Office-based Admin	2												
	Office-based Educator	2												
	Office-based G/worker	2												
SUB-TOTAL												8		
Districts (all 10 Districts)		Sekhukhune East	Sekhukhune South	Mopani East	Mopani West	Capricorn North	Capricorn South	Vhembe East	Vhembe West	Mogalakwena	Waterberg			
	SMS (DD)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	Office-based Admin	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	Office-based Educator	2		2		2		2		2		2	2	
	Office based G/Worker	2	2	2		2		2		2		2	2	
SUB-TOTAL												64		
Circuits (2 Circuits per District)	SMS/CM (1 Per Circuit)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	Office-based Admin (2 Per Circuit)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	Office-based Educator	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	Office-based G/Worker	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	SUB-TOTAL												80	
Schools (5 Per Circuit, 10 Per District)	Principals	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	School-based Educators	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
	School-based Admins	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	School-based G/workers	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	SUB-TOTAL												500	
GRAND TOTAL											652			

Table 6: Full-scale sampling guide.

Among four campuses of Head office (113 Biccard, 33 Biccard, Rentmeester and MASTEC) random sampling for this evaluation picked participants from 113 Biccard and Rentmeester. All 10 districts participated. The EMIS team continued to apply stratified sampling to randomly select 20 circuits (2 from each of the 10 Districts, as well as 5 schools from each of the 20 circuits (=100 Schools).

All categories of permanently employed personnel were targeted for sampling as participants. The focus participants in school-based evaluation remained school principals, educators, school administrators and school-based general workers, though many schools were found to have no administrators and general workers. The focus participants in office-based institutions remained SMSs from Districts and Head office, Circuit Managers, office-based officials, office-based educators, and general workers. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample participants according to the said categories.

The total number of reached participants was 350 instead of 652 due to the following reasons:

- Majority of schools do not have administrators and general workers.
- In some institutions, the sampled participants were either held up in competing programmes, or were on different leaves, or were just not willing to participate in this project.
- In some institutions, the sampled participants were found no longer attached to same, either due to retirement, transfers, promotions, etc though the database is not updated yet.
- Misalignment of sampled participants to their based offices. E.g the database provide a participant under a circuit while he/she is physically in the districts or vice versa.

4.3. Methods of data collection used.

Data was collected electronically to encourage 5th industrial revolution, manage time, and conveniently get it scientifically sorted. Data collection tool (questionnaire) was designed in (Google forms), for ease completion, consolidation, and analysis. Data collectors had this tool electronically on their smart phones.

The IM&E Head Office issued a circular to Districts Directors requesting M&E and EMIS coordinators in Districts and sampled Circuits to conduct data collection from sampled participants. Data collection training sessions were held in each District, for preparing both M&E and EMIS officials as data collectors. The table below shows the dates in which these training sessions were held per district.

District	Training venue	Training date
Vhembe East and West	Vhembe West Agric hall	08/12/2022
Mopani East and West	Mopani West board room	09/12/2022
Sekhukhune East, Sekhukhune South and Capricorn South	Tsoga-o-itirele special school	12/12/2022
Waterberg	Vaalwater circuit	13/12/2022
Mogalakwena	Mokopane south primary school boardroom	14/12/2022

Capricorn North	District office boardroom	27/01/2023
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Table 7.: Scheduled training sessions for IM&E and EMIS officials as data collectors.

In these training sessions the audience developed plans with stipulated strategy, venues, and dates of their data collection per district. The table below reflects the dates in which districts collected their data. The Head office IM&E played a supportive role across all 10 districts.

District	Venue	Target group	Date
Sekhukhune East	1. Dilokong Circuit office	Circuit and School officials	01/02/2023
	2. Mhlaletse circuit	Circuit and school officials	02/02/2023
	3. SKE District office	District officials	08/02/2023
Sekhukhune South	1. DD Boardroom Lebowakgomo	District officials	06/02/2023
	2. Eensaam circuit office	Circuit and School officials	07/02/2023
	3. Moutse Circuit office	Circuit and school officials	08/02/2023
Mogalakwena	1. (EMPC) District office	District officials	02/02/2023
	2. Matlalanane circuit	Circuit and school officials	01/02/2023
	3. Mokopane South Primary	Circuit and school officials	30/01/2023
Waterberg	1. Computer Centre District office	District officials	03/02/2023
	2. Computer Centre District office	Nylstroom circuit and school officials	06/02/2023
	3. Mokolo primary school	Vaalwater circuit and school officials	08/02/2023
Capricorn North	Capricorn N district boardroom	Maune & Mogoshi circuit officials.	01/02/2023
	Mogoshi circuit boardroom	Maune & Mogoshi circuit principals & educators	03/02/2023

	District Director's boardroom	Capricorn district officials	06/02/2023
Capricorn South	1. Mahlasedi Special school	District officials, Circuit, and school officials	31/01/2023
	2. Grace and Hope Special School	Circuit and Schools officials	01/02/2023
	3. Bana Ba Thari Special School	School officials	02/02/2023
Mopani West	Tivumbeni EPCD	All participants	03/02/2023
Vhembe East	1. Fulufhelo Special school	Luvuvhu circuit and school officials	14/02/2023
	2. Niani Circuit office	Niani circuit and school officials	15/02/2023
	3. District Boardroom	District officials	17/02/2023
Vhembe West	1. District office	district officials	31/01/2023
	2. Dzondo Circuit office	Circuit and school official	08/02/2023
	3. Hlanganani Central circuit	Circuit and School officials	09/02/2023
Mopani East	1. Mopane East (DD Boardroom	District officials	08/03/2023
	2. Giyane Science Centre	School officials	08/03/2023
	3. Giyane Science Centre	Circuit Officials	09/03/2023

Table 8: Data collection sessions that were convened for districts and circuits participants.

The availability of participants based at Head office were also requested in a form of invitation which requested their participation. The following table shows the schedule used for reaching them.

Participants Category	Venue	Date	Time
Administration officials	113 Biccard	27/02/2023	09H00
General Workers	113 Biccard	27/02/2023	12H00

SMS	113 Biccard	28/02/2023	12H00
Office-based Educators	Rentmeester	01/03/2023	12H00

Table 9: Data collection sessions that were convened for head office participants.

Steps followed during Data collection.

Step 1: Invitation was sent to all randomly sampled participants.

Step 2: A background presentation about the project and reasons behind it all was shared with participants.

Step 3: Distribution of consent forms, reading and signing it before they are collected back for filing.

Step 4: Each delegate takes the evaluator’s contact number and send “hi” to him/her on WhatsApp. The evaluator responds with a number to the “hi” received.

Step 5: Upon confirmation of each participant having an allocated number, the tool was shared to each.

Step 6: Participants complete the tool and click “submit” button under supervision of data collectors.

Step 7: Evaluators recheck the number of received forms against the number at the beginning of the session, to confirm that all forms distributed were successfully submitted.

Step 8: Evaluators display a slide on how to delete the form, and then assist all delegates to follow accordingly in deleting it from their handsets.

Step 9: Evaluators thank everyone for their time, responses, and appreciate them and their time before the session closes.

4.4. Methods of data analysis used.

Analysis was made electronically for collected quantitative data. Google forms immediately consolidate all quantitative data and present summary through pie

graphs, for easy visualisation of responses, which enhanced interpretation. However, qualitative data was only consolidated by google. The consolidated qualitative data was manually analysed using thematic analysis method. This is where themes were identified and used to classify number of responses per theme, before the actual finding is presented in data tables, to visualize the quantity per a specific feeling/opinion/thought in the responses.

4.5. Limitations to the evaluation and delimitation strategy used.

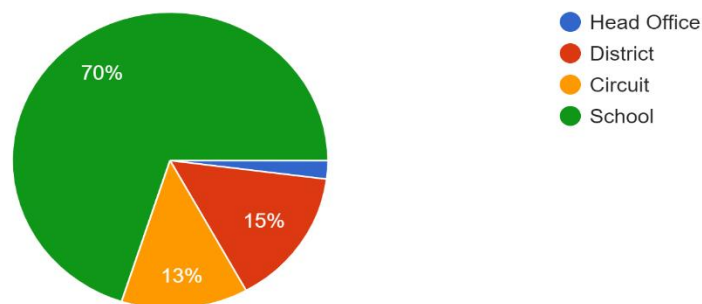
Limitations	Delimitations
Institutions without some categories of employees. For example, schools and Circuits that are without administrators and general workers, which in turn, reduce sample size.	<i>Nothing much could be done.</i>
Unwillingness of sampled participants to participate in the evaluation, and/or participants who have busy schedule which are clashing with EHW evaluation session.	<i>Request for an appointment is sent through an email, though with no response. Rescheduling is done, although sometimes without a success.</i>
Participants with no cell phones/handsets convenient to receive this tool.	<i>Create email address for them and use evaluators and other participants handset.</i>
Participants who cannot remember their google account credentials.	<i>Recover passwords and/or create new google account for them.</i>
Loadshedding disturbs the process.	<i>Scheduled data collection based on the loadshedding schedule and used printout presentation material.</i>

Table 10: Limitations of the evaluation and delimitations strategies used.

5. Findings

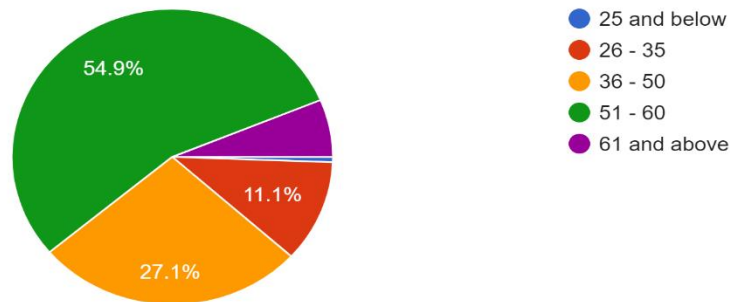
In profiling the participants, majority of respondents are based in schools (70%), where schoolteachers are (41.2%), followed by school principals at 21.2% and other categories at 5.8%. On the other hand, 15% of participants are based in districts, 13% in circuits and 2% at head office. Additionally, 97.7% have no disability. Other employees' categories that made noticeable contribution to these results are administrators at 12.9% and SESs at 11.5%. Otherwise, other categories such as general workers have contributed lesser to the results due to their less number, and therefore their contributions have far less impact to these results. Worryingly is the unavailability of office-based SMS category to participate in this evaluation. Only 5 out of 35 SMS that were targeted from head office, districts and circuit offices were reached to respond to the questionnaire. This result is surely therefore short of SMS sufficient input.

Work Location
347 responses



Majority of participants are women at 61% with men at 38.7%, where 0.3% is at other (transgender). Age wise, the majority (61.2%) of participants is aged with 54.9% falling between 51 and 60 years and 6.3% falling within 60 years and beyond. A total of 98.6% is black with 1.4% white.

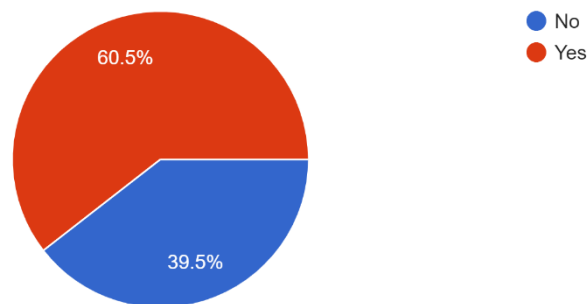
Age(years)
350 responses



This profile implies that the Limpopo department of education is dominated by women and ageing employees with no disability who are largely based in schools. It is therefore worth bearing in mind and maybe concluding that findings are mostly influenced by ageing women employees in schools though there is some little contribution of influence from administrators based in districts and circuits.

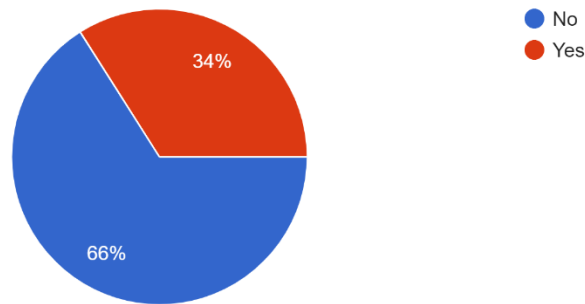
Majority of employees (60.5%) of the department are aware that the EHW directorate does exist though without its access/ utilization shown at 66% below.

1. Do you know of Employee Health and Wellness programme within the department?
347 responses



2. Have you ever used any of EHW services?

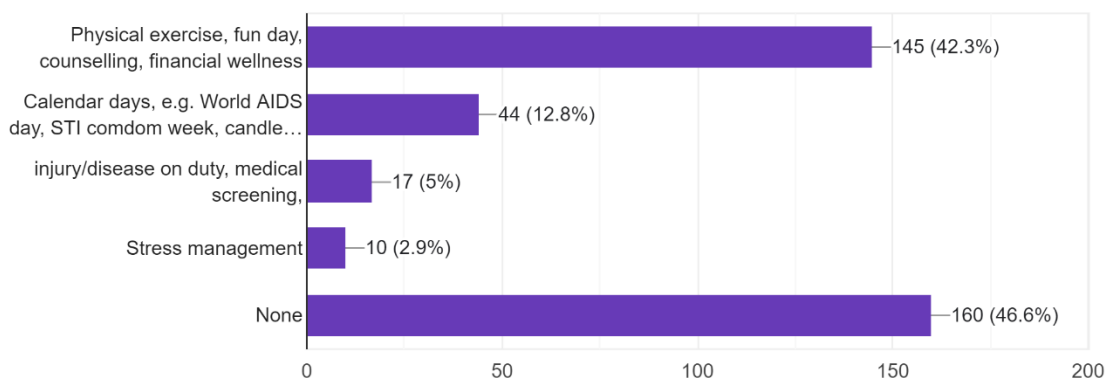
347 responses



Since most respondents are in schools, this finding could suggest that the 34% that utilises EHW programmes may be based in only head office, few in districts and maybe in circuits. This may imply that school-based employees of the department have limited opportunity of access and utilize EHW programme. A strategy to expand EHW services to reach schools is critical, given that the department's majority of personnel is based in same.

3. Which of these services have you used?

343 responses

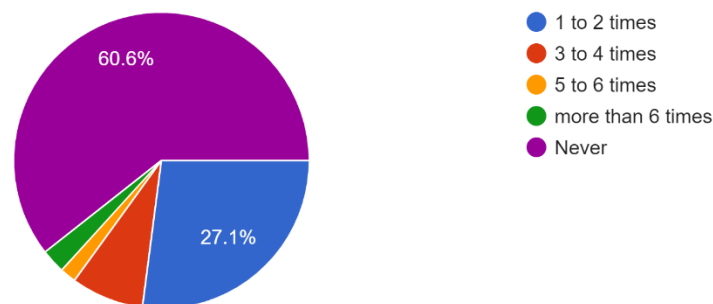


Among those that have access to EHW programme, it is exciting to notice that the pillar on physical exercise, fun day, counselling, financial wellness is doing well in terms of its utilization (42.3%) than all other pillars, and majority (55.4%) find this utilization useful.

However, among those who utilize these services, majority (27%) utilize them less frequently, that is 1-2 times in a month, while few (7.9%) utilize them more frequently (3-4 times or more). It is questionable why most of employees with access to EHW find value in it, but still underutilize it (less frequently).

5. How often do you make use of EHW programme on a monthly basis?

340 responses



It could be due to less supervisory support, too demanding work schedules that deprive employees time or just not giving it a priority. Employees may need some form of encouragement to this effect. Supervisors need advocacy on the importance of EHW to the employees. Maybe it should be compulsory for every employee to sign EHW participation commitment in their individual performance agreement. Some form of monitoring strategy across the province may be necessary to develop and implement because some may use allocated days/time for other personal things/supervisors not releasing supervisees, etc.

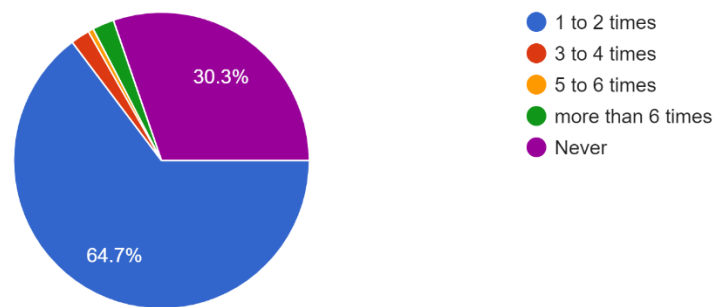
All other services that EHW offers to employees are not being satisfactorily utilized by those who access the EHW. For example, calendar days (12.8%), Injury/disease on duty (5%) and stress management (2.9%) service are utilized only at such small scale. The underutilization of these services suggests that the employees may not be knowing about it, or they could be using alternatives that may include staying at homes or receive unprofessional counselling whose effect comes with absenteeism e.g. they

console themselves with alcohol. Otherwise, it may mean employees do not have a need to utilize these pillars.

A total of 342 participants responded to the question, where its 80.1% confirms that sometimes they do get absent from work. However, (64.7%) of 332 declared frequency of their absenteeism, as only 1-2 times in a month, with (16.6%) of 259 participants associating their absenteeism reasons to illnesses/unhealthy status/check-ups/sicknesses, (12.7%) to family responsibility/studies and (3.4%) to annual/union leaves. This finding can be attributed to normal, approved, and legal leaves of absence other than absenteeism and the scenario may therefore suggest a low rate of absenteeism in the department.

7. How often are you absent from work monthly?

337 responses

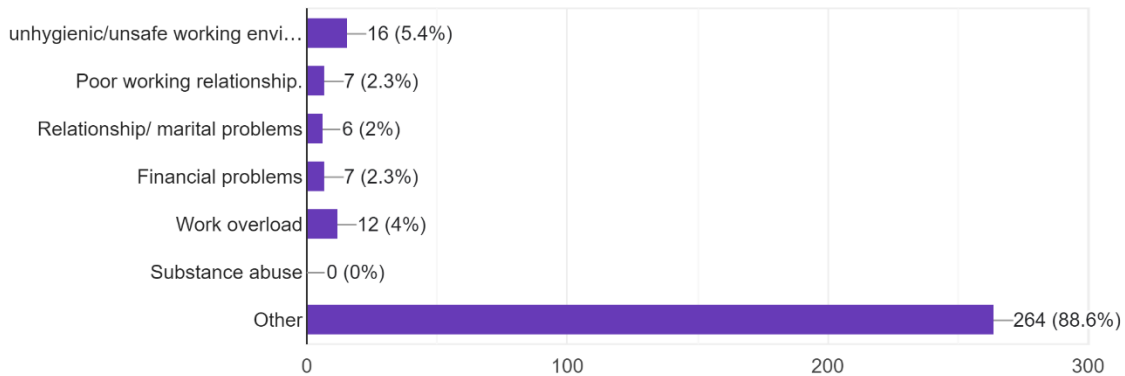


This is confirmed by more than 80% of supervisors who rate the level of absenteeism low (41.1%) and very low (41.6%).

Actual absenteeism is noticed in the 16% of 298 respondents, that mention various EHW needy reasons as their cause of absence from work. Reasons such as unhygienic working space (5.4%), poor working conditions (2.3%), relationship matters (2%), financial problem (2.3%) and work overload (4%) are worth seriously considering to be major reasons contributing to absenteeism in the department.

8. What are your reason for not coming to work?

298 responses



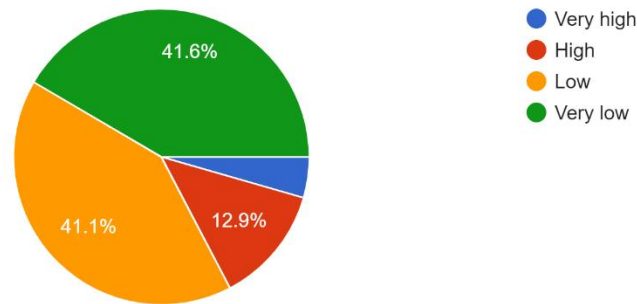
Although this absenteeism rate is low, but it does exist and requires to be attended to. The 17.4% of 202 supervisors who declare absenteeism as high (12.9%) and very high (4.5.%) also confirms this low absenteeism rate in the department.

As this evaluation reveals majority of employees in the department (61.2%) being aged between 51-60 years and above, it may be worth suggesting it (age) to be the major influence of why majority of employees raise illnesses/ sick leaves/ check-ups as main reasons for being absent from work, which confirms that Limpopo education department carries majority of ill-health and aged employees.

This revelation suggests that majority of employees in the department (+80%) do not just become absent without official authority and therefore the rate of absenteeism in the sector can be concluded towards the 16%, (which is low) where the lifted reasons are not legal or authority granted. However, it cannot be ruled out that even if 80% is only off upon granted authority/legally, it could be more frequently than ordinary depending on the frequency of check-ups and state of advanced illnesses. It is therefore worth concluding that due to aged domination of the workforce in the sector, majority is unhealthy and likely to be out of work legally to attend to their ill-health status. This will surely have a negative impact to the level of performance of the department.

11. As a supervisor, rate the level of absenteeism in your workspace?

202 responses

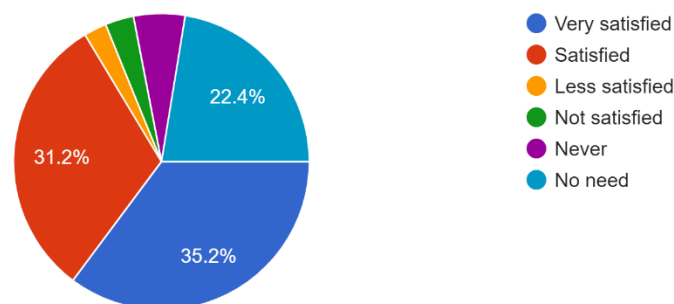


This evaluation also reveals that there is still a percentage that is absent from office 3-4, 4-5 and more than 6 times in a month (5%), which is worth concluding to be contributing to (17.4%) of supervisors who rate the absenteeism high and very high.

It should be concerning why is it only 5% of employees that utilizes injury/disease on duty, medical screening pillar of EHW when 16.6% become absent from work due to related reasons. This suggests that many employees may be unaware of the pillar due to lack of awareness campaign, or they fear for exposure by EHW employees. Otherwise, it may also imply that employees' ill-health conditions do not require EHW intervention, but just an ordinary doctor's consultation.

10. Rate the level of satisfaction in which your supervisor assists you overcome the challenge of absenteeism ?

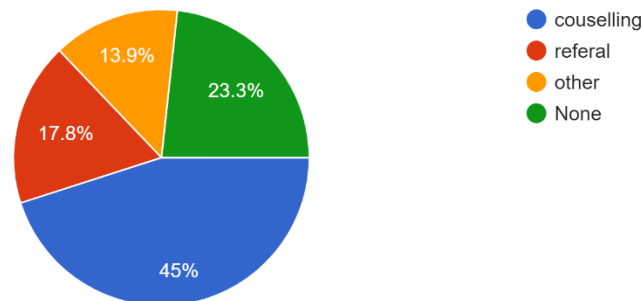
321 responses



The 88.8% of employees are satisfied with how their supervisors assist them deal with their rate of absenteeism or seeing such an assistance unnecessary. Similarly, 70% of supervisors are satisfied with the way they assist employees deal with same.

12. As a supervisor, how do you assist your employees at your workspace to deal with absenteeism?

202 responses



These could probably be employees that are absent for less days or it may be those that are referring to supervisory support as an approval of leaves. Otherwise, it can be attributed to supervisors that utilise counselling (45%), referral (17.8%) and other (13.9%) as their way of assisting their employees deal with absenteeism. Among supervisors who use other strategies (13.9%), majority use face-to-face guidance, advice, and meetings to encourage them to come to work always. They also use these platforms to indicate consequences of absenteeism and benefits of coming to work daily. Those with illnesses are being encouraged to keep their consultations as planned to manage their health conditions. However, others do follow the rules, apply policies, get them fill up the leave forms and manage attendance registers in order to forcefully reduce absenteeism.

There is still more than 15.5% of supervisors who are not/less satisfied with the way they help employees deal with absenteeism, and therefore need EHW intervention.

A total of 255 participants shared their opinions on the strengths of EHW programme, However, 7 (2,7%) were left out as they did not respond with relevant information in relation to this topic.

The opinions of the 248 that responded relevantly were themed in 4 groups as per table below.

Themes	Respondents
Helpful, empowering, excellent, good, useful, yes, etc.	52 (20,39%)
Support to employees; motivating; Improves healthy working environment; effectiveness; problem-solving; capacity building; informative; promotion of health and wellbeing; improvement of physical health; it attends to physical; mental & occupational well-being.	107 (41,96%)
Not visible; unavailable at our institution; never heard of it; never took part, if it was implemented in our institution.	66 (25.87%)
Poor; not strong enough; less effective; not good	23 (9.01%)

When supervisors were asked to indicate how they ensure that their officials in their workspace utilise the EHW programme, 180 responses were received from 350 participants. The table below summarises their opinions.

Theme	Responses
Communication, meetings, workshops, team building, engaging EHW.	39 (21.6%)
Counselling, consultations, referrals.	28 (15.5%)
Events, fun day, sports, developing programmes and giving time for it, encouraging employees to participate in EHW activities.	29 (16%)
Sharing workloads, managing them, improving working relations, supporting one another, cleanliness.	13 (7%)
Not a supervisor, N/A, irrelevant responses, recommendation type of responses,	30 (16.6%)
Nothing, none, new to me, never used, don't know,	41. 22.7%

Question 17: 268 participants responded to share what they think are implementation gaps, and the table below reflects what they raised:

Themes	Respondents
Yes	102 (41.4%)
No, never met a need for it. it is helpful	52 (21.1%)
Not sure	7 (2.8%)
We no longer exercise, only exercise ones, No time given to us, don't know how to refer, district hardly organises sessions with financial and medical professionals for employees, we need space for it, long claiming process, some decisions undermine line functions	32 (13%)
No accessibility, not engaging us, EHW is not known, we need advocacy, communicate to us, inform us, increase manpower, reach us, etc	126 (51.2%)
Irrelevant response	13 (4.8%)

When participants were asked to share their opinion on how they would advise EHW programme to improve on such gaps, 282 responses were received from 350 participants. The table below reflects the results.

Themes	Respondents
Advocacy, communicate your plans, give us workshops, make it known, awareness, orientation, train us.	90 (31.9%)
Develop and implement programmes immediately, calendar of activities, give schools sports day, re-introduce physical education, create time for us to engage, screen us regularly, create online claim forms.	20 (7%)
Be proactive, be active, be helpful, make follow—up, support us, visit working stations, do one-on-one sessions, do consultations, give feedbacks, make it fun, engage teachers effectively, provide gym membership, tuckshops, develop childcare services on campus.	53(18.7%)
Expand to reach us all, establish circuit teams/ committees, include and engage us all across institutions, have HR closer to us, ensure accessibility,	57 (20%)

encourage participation by all, compel supervisors to participate, place needy employees accordingly. etc	
Improve on frequency of EHW activities.	13 (4.6%)
Evaluate your work, invite professionals, sign oath of secrecy	8(2.8%)
No advice, I know nothing, once I know I will advice, I don't know, irrelevant responses, vague statements. E.g. Batho Pele principles, match your per departments, etc.	22(7.8%)

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This evaluation concludes that there is no satisfactory utilization of EHW programme. It provides evidence that although EHW is known to the majority of employees of the department (60.5%), the extent of its utilization is very low (34.%) and among this, only 7.9% utilize it as frequently as 3-4 times or more each month, while 27% utilize it very few times (1-2 times) in the same period. In addition, only one pillar is revealed to be the only one utilised by those that confirm EHW utilization. This is a confirmation of unsatisfactory utilization of EHW programme in the sector.

This evaluation also reveals low absenteeism rate in the Limpopo department of education sector (only 16%); whose reasons include unhygienic working space, poor working conditions, relationship matters, financial problems and work overload. Similarly, it is only 17.4% of supervisors who rate the absenteeism as high. Otherwise 80% of employees confirming their absenteeism is attributed to legal and approved leave of absence due to illnesses, check-ups, study leaves, family matters etc. Similarly, more than 80% of supervisors rate the absenteeism rate low.


It is therefore not evident enough to link unsatisfactory utilization of EHW programme to absenteeism rate, because the two are congruent. While EHW utilization is low/unsatisfactory, absenteeism rate is also low. Arguably, the unsatisfactory utilization of the EHW programme directly impacts to unsatisfactory departmental performance, without employee absenteeism being an agent to the effect. This suggests that employees do come to work carrying whatever EHW needy challenge, if any; then remain unable to work/work ineffectively where their individual performance becomes negatively affected.

Therefore, the EHW directorate only needs to be worried about its programme accessibility and utilization, and not employee's absenteeism. The extreme underutilization of other pillars must worry the directorate as well.

There is a need to expand EHW programme to other levels or areas of the department such as the districts, circuits and schools. Among recommended approaches to close this gap, 51.9% of respondents advise on advocacy, workshop, "make it known", awareness, orientation, expand to reach us" as few. It may also be necessary to develop a strategy to make EHW participation compulsory to all employees, so that allocated day and time is surely used for the intended purpose, where supervisors will also supervise their supervisees on this. Perhaps it may be compulsory to include EHW participation as an output indicator in employees' performance agreement.

In addition, it is recommended further that a teacher or volunteer from a school and circuit can be assigned to run EHW activities in such institutions, which are also advised to re-establish sporting activities in their institutions as compulsory extra-mural activities for all employees. A strategy to improve on expansion should also incorporate utilization of all pillars of EHW programme.

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 31/03/23