



SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE



CASE STUDY: ELECTRIC VEHICLE LEARNERSHIP

Upskilling Youth for the Green Mobility Transport Sector in South Africa

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BACKGROUND

South Africa stands at a pivotal moment in its sustainability journey. As one of the most carbon-intensive economies in the world¹, the country has recognised both the urgency and the opportunity of moving towards a low-carbon future. Through its commitment to a Just Energy Transition², South Africa is not only tackling the environmental imperative of reducing emissions but is also shaping a pathway that prioritises people, communities, and inclusive development.

At the heart of this vision lies the Just Transition framework, which underscores the nation's commitment to achieving a quality life for all by ensuring that the shift to cleaner energy sources enhances social equity and economic resilience³. Grounded in the imperatives of enhancing climate resilience, promoting sustainable development, and achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050⁴, the framework aligns closely with South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, which are its official climate action commitments submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). They set out the country's targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, as well as measures for adaptation, resilience, and support needs. In doing so, it integrates environmental objectives with socio-economic priorities, ensuring that the benefits of the transition extend to all sectors of society, particularly vulnerable communities⁵.

One of the key pillars of this transformation is the transport sector, where electric vehicles (EVs) are positioned as a cornerstone of South Africa's green mobility future⁶. The adoption of EVs has the potential to drastically reduce emissions, drive technological innovation, and create new industries and jobs. Crucially, however, the promise of this sector will only be fully realised if youth (defined as people aged 15–35 years), especially those from historically excluded and disadvantaged communities, are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to participate meaningfully in the emerging green economy.

¹ The Global Economy, 2025

² JET IP, 2023; Presidential Climate Commission, 2024; UNDP, 2023

³ JET IP, 2023; Presidential Climate Commission, 2024; UNDP, 2023

⁴ Climate Commission, 2023

⁵ UNDP South Africa, 2025

⁶ Infrastructure News, 2025

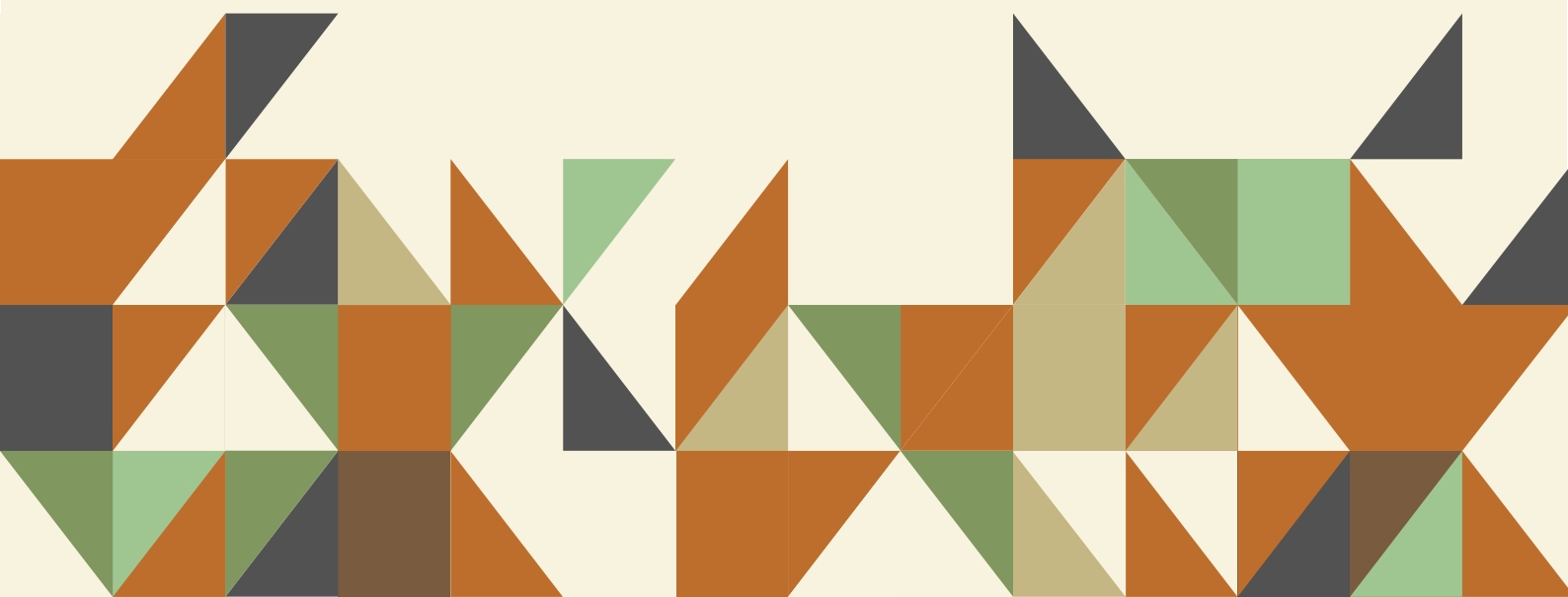


It is within this context that the Electric Vehicle (EV) Learnership Programme emerges as a practical expression of South Africa's Just Energy Transition and as a compelling beacon of hope. Co-led by ZIMI, a South African EV solutions provider, and the Sustainability Institute (SI), a renowned centre for transformative learning, the programme upskills youth with the knowledge and hands-on experience needed for the electric mobility sector. The learnership not only builds individual capabilities and livelihoods but also strengthens the broader green economy. It exemplifies how green innovation and social inclusion can intersect with economic empowerment, creating a just, resilient, and future-ready South Africa.

This initiative has been made possible through the support of the P4G Partnership (Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030), which seeks to accelerate transformative partnerships that drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth while tackling pressing development and climate challenges. The EV Learnership embodies this vision by combining innovation, skills development, and opportunity creation, ensuring that South Africa's journey to net-zero is also a journey toward shared prosperity.

This focus on young people is essential because South Africa's transformation cannot be separated from its broader socio-economic realities. The transition to electric mobility represents not only an environmental necessity but also a strategic response to the nation's deep economic challenges. With youth unemployment alarmingly high at 62.4% in the first quarter of 2025⁷, the EV sector presents a critical opportunity. By leveraging this growing industry, the EV learnership will simultaneously address unemployment, advance environmental sustainability, and lay the foundations for a more inclusive and resilient economy.

⁷ Statistics South Africa; GBS South Africa, 2025



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Programme structure approach and structure

Launched in 2025, the EV Learnership is an eight-month blended learning programme designed for unemployed South African youth who have completed matric (grade 12) and come from vulnerable communities in the Western Cape. Particular preference was given to youth from the communities surrounding Stellenbosch, where both the SI and ZIMI are based. In recognition of the persistent inequalities in access to opportunity, the programme prioritised Black and Coloured youth, who are often excluded from participation in emerging industries.

The programme's objectives are to:

- Create pathways for young people from vulnerable and underserved communities to enter and thrive in the electric mobility sector.
- Develop a skilled pipeline of technicians, innovators, and leaders capable of meeting the growing demand for expertise in electric vehicles and sustainable transport.
- Expand awareness of new green sectors, exposing participants to career opportunities within the EV industry and the broader sustainability landscape.
- Address the skills mismatch by bridging the gap between traditional education and the evolving demands of green industries, equipping graduates with relevant, future-focused skills.

Our approach to the programme was unique in that it combined personal development with technical EV content. This dual focus was critical because workplace readiness encompasses not only technical skills but also soft skills and personal growth. Many young people in our local communities come from environments marked by poverty, trauma, and limited opportunities. This often results in low self-confidence, hopelessness, and difficulty imagining a better future. By integrating personal development, we aimed to rebuild confidence, incorporate life skills, nurture resilience, and help learners envision and create new possibilities for themselves beyond survival.

We implemented a blended learning model combining both in-person and online modules. In-person sessions emphasised classroom instruction, practical exercises, and hands-on activities, allowing learners to gain direct experience. Online modules reinforced learning through recaps and supplementary content, helping to consolidate knowledge. This approach also reduced programme costs, particularly in relation to stipends, while preparing learners for the increasingly digital landscape across industries.



PROGRAMME ROADMAP

PHASE 1: RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Conducted short research, including interviews and surveys, to understand sector needs and skill gaps.
- Engaged with companies to identify requirements for hosting interns.
- Designed a curriculum informed by partner expertise and industry feedback.
- Recruited learners through online platforms and community-based advertising (e.g., posters in common areas).

PHASE 2: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TRAINING (3 MONTHS)

- Delivered classroom-based learning on technical EV, personal development and computer literacy.
- Incorporated practical components alongside theoretical content - in partnership with ZIMI, which led the technical and practical training sessions.
- Site visits.

PHASE 3: WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE (5 MONTHS)

- Partnered with companies to host learners for on-the-job training, giving them real workplace exposure.
- Learners applied for internship opportunities, gaining practical experience and strengthening their employability.

Learning philosophy

Aligned with the Sustainability Institute's core learning principles⁸. The programmes emphasised place-based learning, leveraging local contexts and communities to make education authentic and relevant, allowing learners to connect classroom instruction to real-world EV challenges and opportunities through practical exercises and direct engagement with their surroundings.

The programme prioritised learning by doing, combining hands-on technical tasks with personal development activities to cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, and active participation. It also supported holistic development, addressing intellectual, physical, and emotional growth to help learners integrate personal agency with professional skills. Additionally, the learnership fostered environmental and social awareness by situating learning within learners' lived realities and industry contexts, nurturing stewardship, responsibility, and the capacity to navigate complex challenges. This was to ensure that the programme is immersive and transformative.

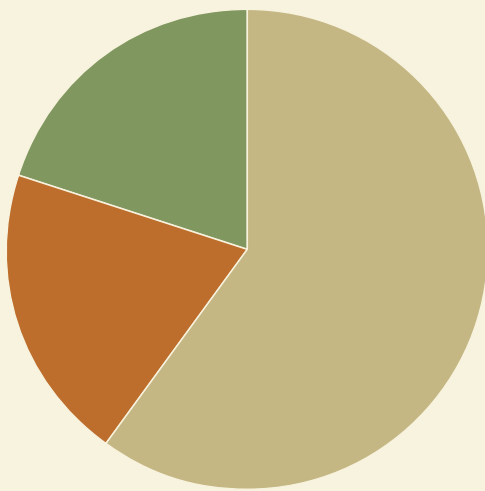
⁸ <https://www.sustainabilityinstitute.net/about-us/learning-philosophy/>

PROGRAMME OUTPUT AND OUTCOMES

Research and Design: In total, 11 companies expressed willingness to participate, with each committing to host at least two interns, and one company offering to host 20 interns, resulting in 39 potential placement opportunities. However, requirements varied across companies: some preferred candidates with degrees, while others indicated the need for monetary support to effectively host interns.

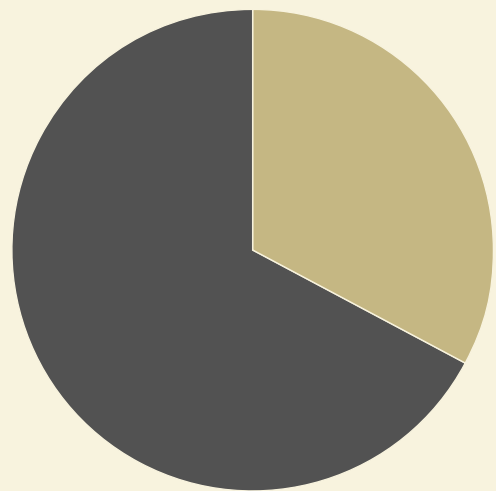
The EV Learnership was launched at the end of 2024 with the objective of enrolling 40 participants. The programme received 15 applications, of which 8 met the eligibility criteria. Two of these participants subsequently secured alternative opportunities, resulting in **an inaugural cohort of 6 learners, all drawn from communities surrounding Stellenbosch**. All participants demonstrated strong commitment, maintaining attendance rates between 80–90%.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE:



Learners' work experience Background

- No Work experience (60%)
- Experience - No prior automotive background (20%)
- Limited experience (20%)



Gender distribution of learners

- Female (33%)
- Male (67%)



	MATERIAL/ CONTENT	LEARNING FORMAT	SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES
EV Foundational Knowledge and basic practical skills	EV Foundations, Historical Context and trends, Charging systems, Battery Types and Safety and Sustainable Development	Classroom-based technical instruction, practical workshops, hands-on sessions with EV components and site visits	Learners acquire essential EV knowledge and develop basic hands-on competence in EV safety, charging infrastructure, electrical systems, and vehicle maintenance
Personal Growth	Personal Development, Emotional intelligence and Communications	Facilitated reflective sessions, group discussions, role-play exercises, and guided journaling	Learners built confidence, strengthened resilience, and developed self-awareness, agency, and leadership skills
Workplace Readiness	CV development, interview preparation guides, and digital literacy training materials	Interactive workshops, one-on-one coaching, and simulated mock interviews	Learners completed the programme with professionally developed CVs, enhanced interview and digital literacy skills
Industry Exposure	Case studies of South Africa's EV ecosystem, field visit, mentorship guidelines	Structured site visits to EV companies and guest lectures from EV companies	Learners engaged in practical learning through structured field visits and gained valuable insights into sector opportunities and career pathways.
In-job training	Workplace practical learning aligned to employer needs	Shadowing and supervised practical work in EV companies	Learners gained workplace-based practical experience in shadowing and supervised tasks in EV companies, with training aligned to employer needs for further official employability



MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACH

The learnership integrated a comprehensive M&E framework aligned with the curriculum, designed to measure both learning outcomes and programme impact:

- **Baseline Assessments:** Conducted at enrolment to establish participants' prior technical knowledge, soft skills, and workplace readiness.
- **Formative Assessments:** Regular practical exercises, peer-learning sessions, and reflective activities provided ongoing feedback to adjust teaching methods and support individual learner progress.
- **Summative Assessments:** End-of-module evaluations measured mastery of technical competencies, personal development, and professional readiness.
- **Impact Tracking:** Post-programme follow-ups assessed employment outcomes, further education enrolment, and entrepreneurial engagement, capturing the long-term effect of the learnership.
- **Qualitative Reflections:** Learner and mentor feedback, alongside field visit debriefs, informed continuous improvement, ensuring the programme remained relevant, inclusive, and effective.

This structured approach ensured that the EV Learnership not only equipped participants with practical skills but also fostered holistic personal and professional development, positioning graduates to actively participate in South Africa's green economy.



PROGRAMME OUTCOMES AND REFLECTIONS:

Key learnings and challenges in implementing the EV Learnership Programme

Throughout the EV Learnership Programme, reflections were carried out at different stages to capture experiences as they unfolded. These reflections provide an opportunity to look back on the journey, highlighting both the successes and the challenges encountered across the phases. By documenting the lessons emerging from design, learning delivery, and on-the-job training, the reflections serve as a foundation for continuous improvement and for strengthening future programme implementation.



Phase 1 & 2: Design and learning delivery - building the foundation for knowledge and skills

CHALLENGES

Budget limitations: Insufficient stipends: For learners dependent on stipends to support their livelihoods, the financial offering was not adequate, which discouraged participation and reduced the number of potential applicants.

Financial constraints restricted the inclusion of high-impact experiential components such as a “build-your-own EV” model.

Recruitment delays: The recruitment process took longer than anticipated, as it needed to better align with learners’ baseline technical readiness. These delays subsequently affected the programme’s commencement.

Limited outreach and sector unfamiliarity: A low number of applications were received, partly due to limited community outreach and the fact that the EV sector remains relatively unknown to youth. Many struggled to envision career paths beyond the programme, making it difficult to attract applicants.

Curriculum design challenges: Striking a balance between delivering technically rigorous content and making it accessible to learners with little to no prior technical exposure proved difficult.

Varied knowledge levels: Differences in learning paces and knowledge levels made it challenging to maintain consistent engagement across the group.

Articulation of learning needs: At the outset, some learners struggled to express their learning needs, limiting the programme’s ability to respond effectively in real time.

Gender and socio-economic barriers: Female learners, in particular, faced challenges due to limited prior exposure to technical knowledge and digital skills, requiring deliberate facilitation to ensure inclusivity.

Constraints on resources limited the depth and frequency of practical learning activities.

Online learning challenges: Connectivity issues and reliance on mobile devices hindered the online learning experience for many participants.

Monitoring and evaluation difficulties: Standardising monitoring and evaluation approaches was difficult, given the varied learning levels and contexts of participants.

The workplace component varied significantly for each student, which created inconsistencies in the overall learning experience.

Monitoring and Evaluation results

Here's a complete, continuous programme evaluation report covering Modules 1–5, with the final exam and a recommendations section added at the end for future cohorts. The EV programme has successfully guided students through a progressive learning pathway:

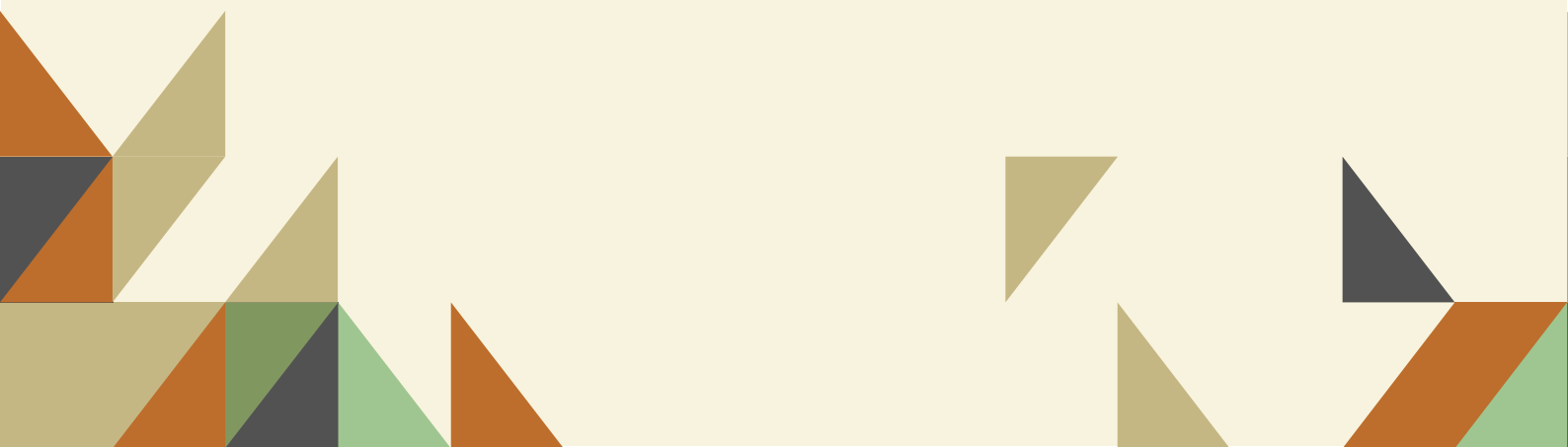
- Module 1: Critical thinking and research.
- Module 2: Creative communication and vocabulary.
- Module 3: Applied numeracy and efficiency analysis.
- Module 4: Interactive assessment and consolidation.
- Module 5: Formal summative evaluation.

MODULE	ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	REFLECTION SUMMARY
Module 1: EV Article Analysis & Presentation	Students selected an EV-related article and addressed five key questions, then presented a 2–3 minute creative summary (poster, video, or live talk).	Strong creativity and engagement. 33% (2 of 6) struggled with research depth. 100% pass rate.	Introduced debates around EVs and sustainability. Creativity was strong, but research skills need more support. Students began to grasp the broader EV significance.
Module 2: EV Jingle Home Assignment	Created and performed a short advertising jingle promoting EVs, using key vocabulary (electric vehicle, emissions, etc.).	Wide variety of jingles (humorous to factual). 100% pass rate. Strong creativity and vocabulary integration.	Reinforced vocabulary and creative communication. Helped students understand how messaging influences public perception of EVs.
Module 3: Onboard Data Energy Efficiency Activity	Analysed how driving behaviour affects EV efficiency by comparing efficient vs inefficient trips and calculating costs.	66% (4 of 6) initially struggled with calculations. Restructured to include peer-supported practice. 100% mastery achieved later.	Built numeracy, resilience, and confidence. Demonstrated tangible links between driving style and energy use.
Module 4: Battery Technology – Mentimeter Assessment	Online Mentimeter quiz (multiple-choice, short-answer, and efficiency calculations) to consolidate knowledge.	Completed online in real time. Immediate results and feedback. All students passed.	Interactive tools improved engagement and comprehension. Reinforced key concepts, especially efficiency and emissions.
Module 5: Final Exam	Three-hour comprehensive written exam covering Modules 1–4 with various question types.	83% (5 of 6) passed comfortably. One borderline fail (49%) passed on retest (capped at 50%).	Demonstrated strong learning gains. Identified need for early individual support in technical areas. Class review strengthened collective understanding.

Final Module (No Assessment): The concluding module of the programme did not carry a formal assessment. Instead, it marked the completion of all taught sessions, serving as a space for reflection, consolidation, and closure. This allowed students to engage more openly in discussions, draw connections across modules, and celebrate their learning journey without the pressure of an additional graded task.

Across the five modules, students grew from tentative researchers to confident problem-solvers and communicators. Creativity and collaboration emerged as strengths, while numeracy and research depth were areas requiring more support. Importantly, students now better understand how EV adoption intersects with technology, environment, economics, and society.

- **Earlier scaffolding of research skills:**
 - Provide structured guidance on sourcing, evaluating, and summarising articles before Module 1.
 - Run a short workshop on research methods.
- **Numeracy practice is integrated earlier**
 - Introduce basic EV efficiency and cost calculations sooner, with low-stakes practice before the full activity in Module 3.
 - Use incremental problem sets to build confidence step by step.
- **Peer learning and collaboration**
 - Expand opportunities for students to teach back concepts to each other, especially in technical areas.
 - Pair weaker and stronger students strategically during practice exercises.
- **Continuous low-stakes assessments**
 - Use short quizzes or polls (e.g., Mentimeter, WhatsApp) throughout to reinforce knowledge in real time.
 - Helps prevent gaps from widening before the final exam.
- **Balanced assessment weighting**
 - Maintain creativity-based tasks (like jingles) alongside technical problem-solving.
 - Ensures different learning styles are valued while keeping core numeracy and analysis skills strong.
- **Exam preparation support**
 - Provide a mock exam or revision session before the final test.
 - Include worked examples of both calculations and essay-style questions.



Lessons learnt and achievements

- The pilot emphasised the need for holistic development, integrating technical training, personal growth, and sustainable development principles.
- A small cohort allowed for personalised attention, deeper engagement, and valuable learning for future scaling.
- Building strong industry partnerships, such as the collaboration with ZIMI, enhanced the programme's credibility and ensured alignment with sector needs. It also provided the practical space for regular weekly hands-on engagements and industry-based mentorship and teaching.
- A diverse group of learners fostered peer-to-peer mentorship, broadened perspectives, and encouraged collaborative learning.
- Hands-on activities and site visits provided powerful opportunities to connect theory with practice, resulting in meaningful and lasting learning.
- Peer learning during practical sessions boosted learners' confidence and strengthened teamwork skills, and also cultivated resilience and a strong sense of belonging within the cohort.
- Incorporating online modules reduced programme costs, particularly regarding stipends, while maintaining learning quality.
- Flexible facilitation methods and learner-driven approaches encouraged high levels of engagement and adaptability.
- Differentiated assessments recognised learners' varying readiness levels, ensuring inclusivity and fairness.
- Female participants, despite entering a male-dominated sector with limited prior exposure, demonstrated remarkable growth in confidence and capability.



PERSONAL IMPACT STORIES

(Quotes/testimonies from learners and facilitators)



“As a family member, I’ve witnessed a remarkable transformation in our sister since joining the internship programme. Before, there was a sense of hesitation and even a bit of giving up when things felt difficult. But now, I see a confident, motivated young person who believes in their abilities and is eager to learn, grow, and grab new opportunities. This experience has truly reignited their drive and sense of purpose”

“My journey with ZIMI has been incredibly rewarding so far. As part of a start-up, the pace is fast, and there’s a steep learning curve, but that’s exactly where much of my growth has come from. I’ve had to step up and take initiative because, in an environment that’s still developing, you can’t always wait to be taught, you have to be proactive and learn quickly. This has pushed me to show up for myself in new ways.

One of the biggest highlights for me has been the level of responsibility I’ve been trusted with. I’m currently providing technical support and handling a range of general tasks, and being given this level of trust makes me feel truly valued. It shows that the team believes in me, and that builds my confidence.

The working environment stands out, it’s supportive, and the leadership and mentoring I’ve received have been incredible. I feel like I’m really holding my own as a member of the company. A few standout moments include travelling to Johannesburg and driving the electric truck for the first time, an unforgettable experience. I’m also looking forward to our next site visit.

But the top highlight for me has been receiving a formal offer to become a full-time employee at ZIMI. That moment marked a major milestone. The journey has only just begun, and I’m excited for what lies ahead”



“ I have been doing good at mellowcabs the experience has been exciting. There is moments where it gets quite challenging for me personally. I am certainly grateful for the opportunity with them and I have been learning a lot of things the atmosphere has been great.

It has always been about gaining hands-on experience with them and growing as an individual”



“This programme didn’t just empower the learners, it empowered me as a facilitator. Developing the teaching material brought me back to the basics and pushed me into deep research, which was both refreshing and exciting. With a background in renewable energy, I had always wanted to engage with the EV space, and this programme gave me a meaningful entry point, by empowering young people. It also opened doors for me to connect with key industry players like ZIMI. On a personal level, I was deeply encouraged by how the students consistently showed up and sought solutions with full commitment. Witnessing their growth, despite the socio-economic challenges they face, was incredibly motivating. We were able to help them imagine better futures for themselves and actively work towards them. Seeing their joy during their first EV ride and watching them push past knowledge gaps without being discouraged was truly rewarding. Looking ahead to the next cohort, I feel even more equipped and inspired to strengthen the programme and continue supporting these young people in realising their full potential.”



“The programme created space for students to either reconnect to or find their voice as a means for expression. I have worked with youth/ students from various socio-economic sectors and what has been common is that every person has a dream. For those from lower social economic level, being able to “find a seat at the table” and if no seat was available, they learned how to create their table. Recalling a time when we held “mock interviews’ at Spier and a student realised that she could ask a question in her language (isiXhosa) and then observe the change in her voice and body language was an aha moment for all participants. Knowing that there are rule and some rules can be pushed was a wonderful observation of how they developed their sense of agency and improved self confidence. They recognise that Personal Development is a life long process and as an Institution, the SI can be confident in contributing to nation-building in South Africa. As with all programmes, there is scope for improvement and development of the programme”

[CLICK HERE FOR A FULL VIDEO THAT CAPTURES THE JOURNEY](#)



PHASE 3: ON-THE-JOB TRAINING- TRANSLATING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

During this phase, three partner organisations, Mellovans, Stroom, and ZIMI, joined the programme to provide students with on-the-job training opportunities. This collaboration represented a significant step in connecting classroom learning with practical workplace experience, enabling interns to apply their skills in real-world contexts while contributing fresh perspectives and talent to the host organisations.

The reflections that follow highlight key aspects of the hosting process, including intern performance, mentorship and supervision practices, employability outcomes, and the broader impact on both learners and partner organisations.

- **MellowVans** is a South African company specialising in electric delivery vehicles designed for urban last-mile logistics. Their vehicles offer a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to traditional delivery methods, particularly in the e-commerce sector.
- **Stroom** aims to transform South Africa's delivery services by integrating cargo e-bikes into the delivery fleets of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), enhancing efficiency and addressing key challenges in delivery logistics and operations with innovative, financially viable and impactful solutions.
- **ZIMI**, a start-up, was founded to help accelerate the transition to clean transportation by providing an easy-to-use, affordable, and intelligent EV charging infrastructure platform. They hosted interns for the first time. Their innovative approach to creating defined roles for students highlighted how emerging companies can leverage internships to build capacity while supporting the growth and development of young professionals.



Hosting experience and process

The organisations that had previously hosted interns were able to integrate students smoothly into their existing systems. Their established internal processes provided structure and support, allowing interns to gain hands-on experience while contributing meaningfully to daily operations.

For first-time hosts, the process required more preparation but also presented an opportunity to create tailored roles for interns. This approach encouraged reflection on long-term organisational needs, including how interns could add value beyond immediate tasks and potentially contribute to specific projects.

A key learning was the importance of clearly defined outcomes for the internship period. Beyond providing job exposure, hosts suggested that internships could culminate in tangible outputs, such as a project deliverable, to enhance both the learning experience and organisational benefit.

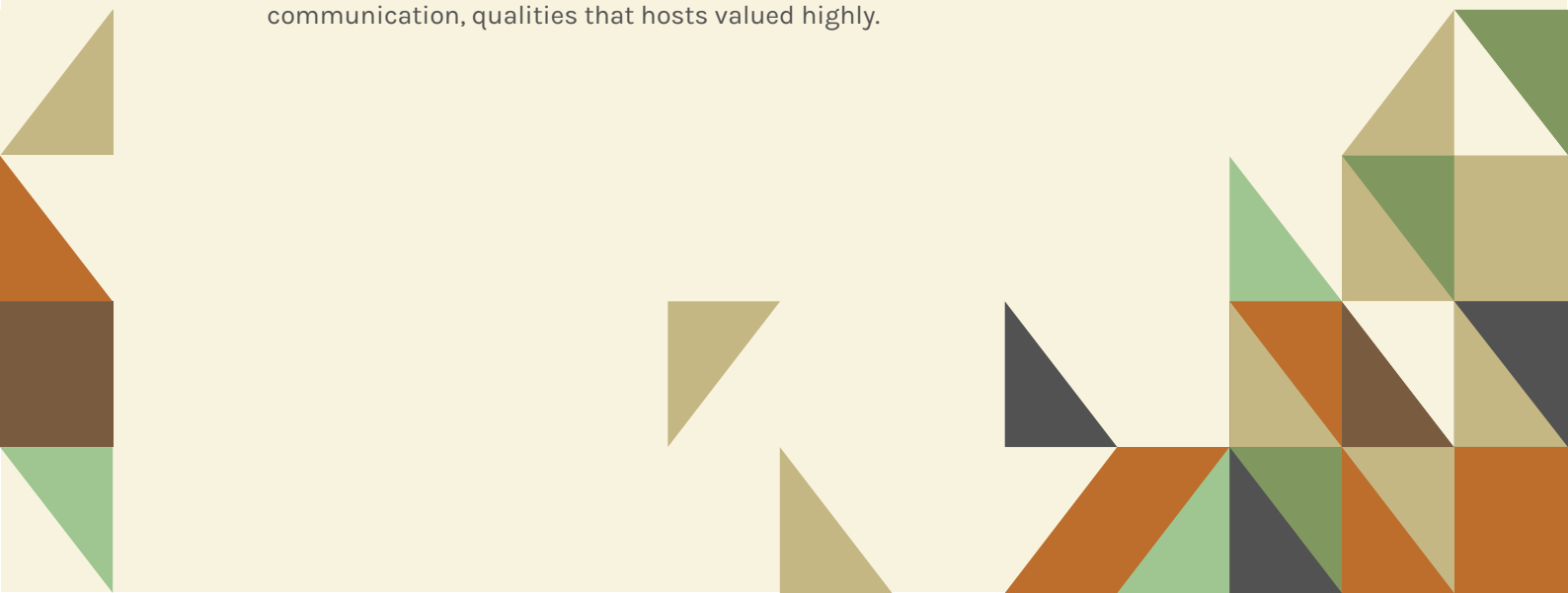
Communication and administrative support

Some hosts experienced challenges with communication, particularly during the recruitment and placement stages. Delays in receiving responses from interns created uncertainty and slowed down processes such as interviews. An improvement proposed was to explore alternative communication channels, such as messaging platforms, in order to ensure more responsive interactions. Additionally, there was a call for stronger administrative support from the coordinating institution to streamline logistics and communication between interns and host organisations.

Intern performance and learning

Overall, interns demonstrated competency in basic workplace skills and showed noticeable growth in confidence and communication. However, there is a need to deepen technical exposure, particularly around electric vehicle (EV) technology. While site visits and EV demonstrations were included, hosts noted that more frequent hands-on experiences would have helped learners gain greater comfort and readiness, especially for tasks such as driving EVs in operational contexts.

Personal development sessions were identified as a strong feature of the programme. These sessions built soft skills such as confidence, adaptability, and effective communication, qualities that hosts valued highly.



Mentorship and supervision

All host organisations demonstrated sufficient capacity to mentor interns. Where roles and responsibilities were well-defined, supervision was more structured, ensuring interns received targeted guidance. The interview process was highlighted as useful in matching interns to suitable roles. One recommendation for future cohorts was the introduction of mentorship rotation. By exposing interns to different departments, including HR and other non-technical units, they could build cross-cutting skills and experience, expand their understanding of organisational dynamics, and develop soft skills alongside technical expertise.

Employability

Employability outcomes were positive across all hosts. Organisations expressed strong interest in retaining interns as employees, recognising their growth and improved workplace readiness over the course of the programme. Interns who initially presented as introverted became more open, confident, and engaged, demonstrating the value of combining technical training with personal development.

For start-up organisations, hosting interns also proved to be cost-effective, reducing the need for lengthy recruitment processes while simultaneously building a pipeline of trained talent. More established organisations highlighted the value of their investment in training interns, noting that retaining them as employees made strategic sense.

Impact on organisations

Beyond benefits to the interns, host organisations also experienced positive outcomes. Supervisors and team members had the opportunity to strengthen their leadership, coaching, and supervisory skills. The process fostered reflection on organisational roles and capacity, while also promoting a culture of learning and mentorship within teams.

Overall reflections

The reflections revealed that the internship programme had a dual impact, enhancing the skills and confidence of interns while also benefiting host organisations through leadership development and workforce strengthening.

The importance of partnerships in shaping meaningful internships was consistently emphasised. Intentionality in programme design, particularly with pathways towards employment, was noted as critical to success. Unlike many internships that lack employment prospects, this programme fostered a sense of purpose and long-term opportunity.

As one host reflected: “We employ on attitude and train for skills.” This statement captured the essence of the programme’s focus on personal development as a core competency, reinforcing the value of combining technical training with character development to build a resilient and adaptable workforce. This collaboration not only enhanced the students’ learning journey but also demonstrated the value of partnerships between education and industry in creating pathways for skills development and future employability.

PROGRAMME IMPACT

The EV Learnership has successfully equipped participants with practical skills, industry exposure, and personal development opportunities, creating clear pathways into employment, further education, and entrepreneurship. The programme illustrates the transformative potential of targeted upskilling initiatives to empower unemployed youth, fostering confidence, agency, and entry into the emerging green economy.

Post-programme achievements

- **Graduate Outcomes:** All six learners developed professional CVs and applied for the on-the-job training programme. In which 80% received positive feedback regarding work readiness from partner companies for their improved communication skills, industry knowledge, and confidence during interviews.
- **Job and Training Placements:** Four learners (66.7%) successfully secured in-job training placements with stipends higher than those offered during the initial training phase.
- **Employment:** One learner transitioned directly into full-time permanent employment with a partner company, reflecting the programme's success in bridging training to long-term work opportunities.
- **Entrepreneurship:** One graduate chose to establish a transport business, with future plans to integrate electric vehicles into their operations, demonstrating entrepreneurial initiative and future alignment with green mobility solutions.
- **Further Education:** Another learner enrolled in a three-year trade programme in boiler making, underscoring the renewed confidence and aspiration to pursue sustainable career pathways.

The outcomes highlight the programme's success in transforming learners' prospects, with tangible progress across employment, entrepreneurship, and education. Beyond technical skills, the learnership fostered confidence, resilience, and a sense of agency, critical ingredients for enabling youth to actively participate in and contribute to South Africa's green economy transition. While the programme has delivered great outcomes, a key challenge lies in ensuring that the focus remains on job creation rather than primarily leading to further studies. Although continued education is a positive achievement, filtering applicants will be essential to achieve the programme's core objective of driving job creation.



FUTURE OUTLOOK

The EV Learnership Programme has already demonstrated a significant impact by equipping young people with both technical and soft skills, providing meaningful industry exposure, and creating pathways into employment, further education, and entrepreneurship. Building on this success, the next phase will focus on refining key programme components and scaling nationally, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and inclusivity.

Strengthening employer alignment will be central to refining the programme's impact. Involving employers early to ensure candidate selection match available roles and also reflects real recruitment needs, while structured placement agreements will open direct pathways to employment. Incorporating defined training outcomes, such as project-based deliverables at the end of placements. This will give participants meaningful achievements and reinforce the programme's value to industry partners.

Participants: Based on the outcomes of the first cohort and through ongoing monitoring and evaluation, the participant profile will be redefined to better reflect long-term outcomes. This includes tracking how many learners remain in the sector over the next year, whether through further studies in industry-related fields or by securing employment.

Recruitment Strategy: A more targeted recruitment approach will be adopted: this is to ensure we filter applicants based on employability needs and career readiness, ensuring alignment with specific job pathways in the EV value chain. This will include considering the following approach:

- 65% of learners will be drawn from technical colleges, leveraging their foundational technical training to maximise employability.
- 35% of learners will be new entrants, ensuring inclusivity, fresh talent, and broader exposure to the EV industry for young people not yet in technical training.

To strengthen recruitment, the programme will expand community outreach and participate in career days both before and during the learnership. These efforts will promote EV-related trades and complementary technical fields, while also creating opportunities for learners not immediately placed in industry roles to continue through pathways with FET and TVET institutions. These initiatives are expected to increase programme sign-ups and visibility across communities.



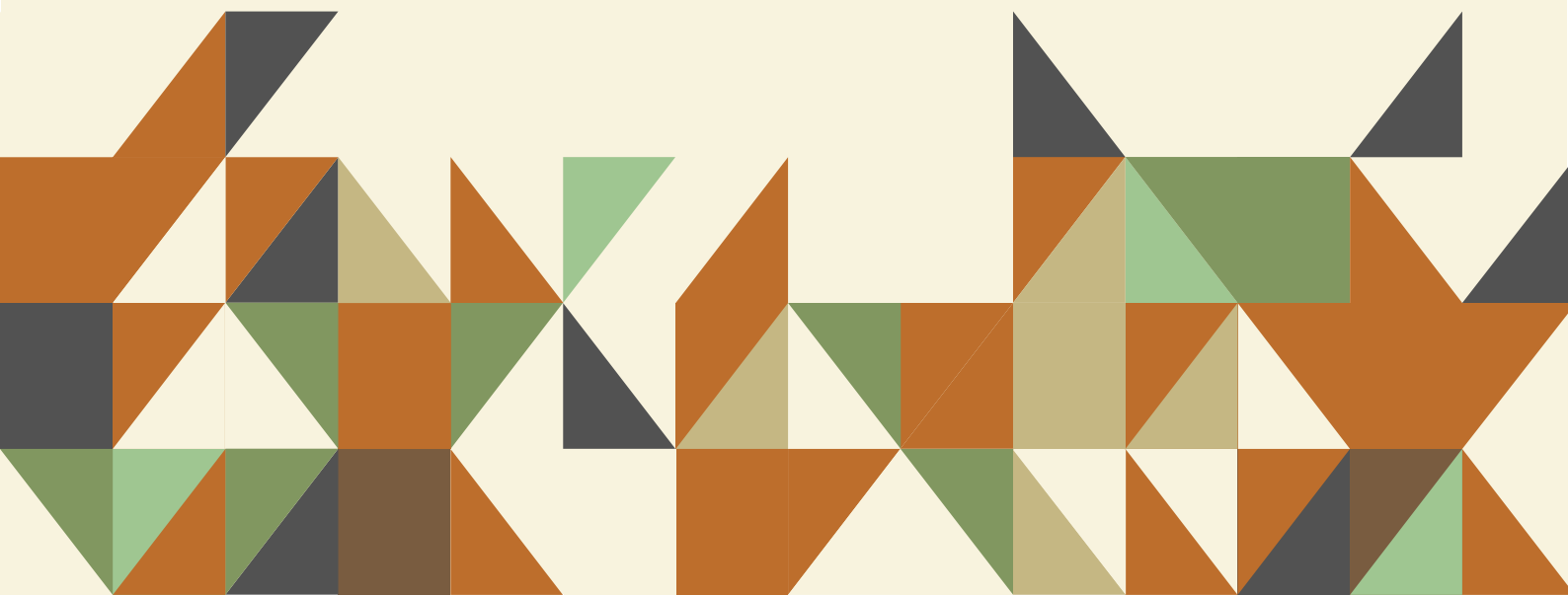
Curriculum Development: The curriculum will continue evolving to integrate emerging areas of green mobility, ensuring graduates remain relevant to the potential employment roles and the overall rapidly advancing sector. To support programme fidelity and transferability, facilitator toolkits and peer-learning networks will be developed after the first national roll-out, enabling consistent delivery and knowledge-sharing across different regions.

Programme Timeline: The next intake is planned for 2026, with the programme transitioning to an annual cycle thereafter. Each intake will run over nine months:

- 3 months of classroom-based learning.
- 6 months of workplace experience.

Scaling Strategy: The pilot national roll-out will begin in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. These provinces were selected due to the presence of established industry players and the relationships and interests developed during the first cohort's engagements. As part of the scaling strategy, a high-level theory of change has been developed for Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. This framework aligns programme activities with long-term outcomes, ensuring that the EV Learnership Programme contributes to:

- Reducing unemployment.
- Building a just and inclusive green workforce.
- Advancing South Africa's climate resilience and sustainable economic growth.



Inputs

- Funding and resources for programme design, delivery, and evaluation.
- Expertise from industry partners, TVET/FET colleges, and training bodies.
- Access to regional labour market data and employer networks.
- Support from government agencies and policy alignment.
- Infrastructure for practical training (labs, EVs, charging stations).

Activities

Conduct a Jobs Analysis

- Map out current and emerging roles within the EV value chain (e.g. EV technicians, charging infrastructure installers, fleet and marketing support).
- Assess recruitment needs in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng to align curriculum with specific skills gaps.
- Identify transferable skills from adjacent industries that can be leveraged for EV workforce readiness.

Scope and Secure Partnerships

- Engage with TVET/FET colleges, industry training bodies, and private sector employer.
- Formalise collaboration with industry and government agencies to ensure alignment with regional development priorities.
- Develop agreements with employers for work-integrated learning and post-training job placement opportunities.

Curriculum Localisation

- Adapt the revised curriculum to reflect the regional employment landscape identified through the jobs analysis.
- Integrate practical training components with local industry partners for hands-on learning.

Implementation and Delivery

- Pilot the adapted programme with a small cohort in each new province to test operational feasibility.
- Roll out full-scale intake once pilot adjustments are integrated.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- Track learner outcomes (skills mastery, job placement rates, retention in the EV sector).
- Collect feedback from learners, employers, and facilitators to refine the model over time.
- Share lessons learned across provinces to strengthen national coherence and knowledge transfer.



Outcomes

Short-term

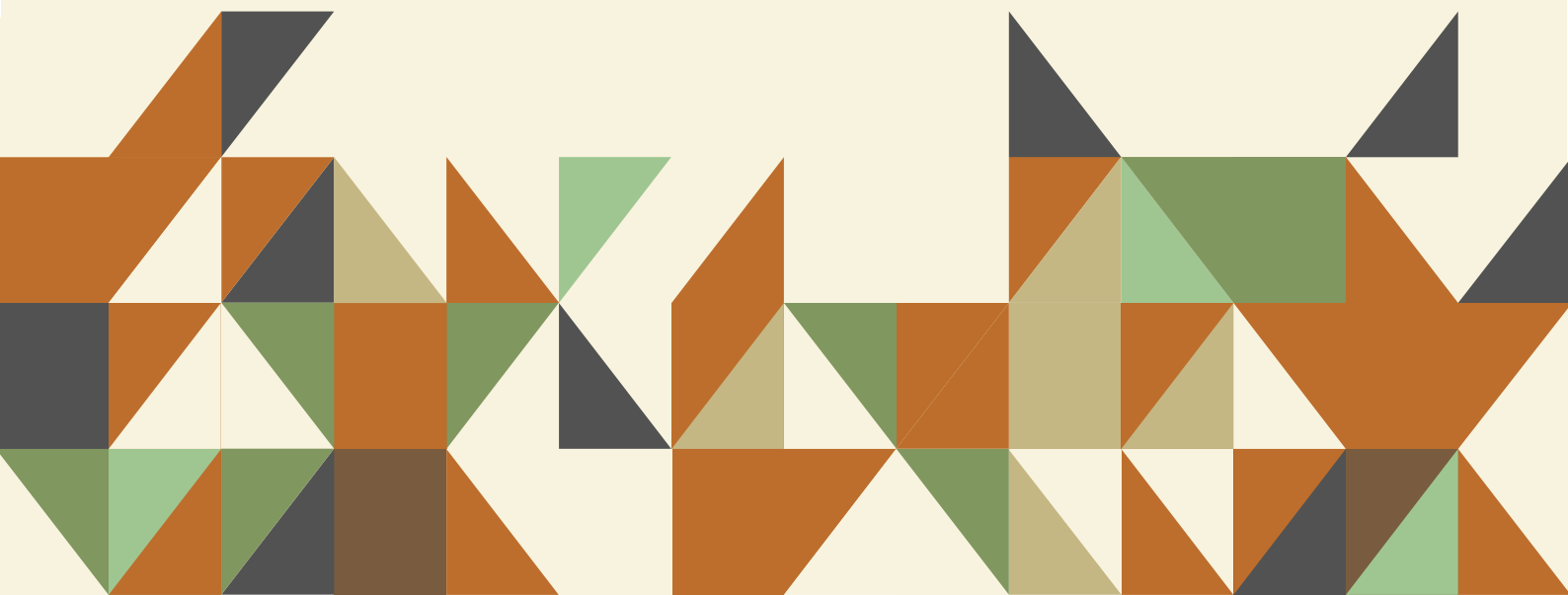
- Clear understanding of regional EV workforce needs and transferable skills.
- Strengthened partnerships with employers, training institutions, and the government.
- Suitable candidates/participants identified.
- Increased learner sign-ups.
- Localised curriculum aligned to employer recruitment needs.
- Pilot cohorts successfully trained and placed in entry-level roles.

Medium-term

- Increased number of trained EV professionals across provinces.
- Employers report improved access to skilled workers in the EV sector.
- Sustained collaboration between training institutions and industry partners.
- Evidence of career mobility for learners entering the EV workforce.

Long-term

- Contribution to South Africa's Just Energy Transition through creation of inclusive, future-ready green jobs.
- Strengthened regional economies through localised EV workforce pipelines.
- A national EV training model that can be scaled across provinces with coherence and adaptability.



THANK YOU

Thank you to the following partner companies that hosted learners for internships:

ZIMI

Zimi was founded to help accelerate the transition to clean transportation. They do this by providing an easy-to-use, affordable, and intelligent EV charging and energy management platform. They assist logistics, field services and private fleets to charge vehicles, manage energy, and track carbon while transitioning to EVs.

<https://www.zimicharge.com/>

Mellovans

MellowVans are South African developed and manufactured electric delivery vehicles that provide low cost and emission-free last-mile transport for e-commerce distribution. With enough cargo space to deliver almost anything, and the ability to offer cold chain solutions, MellowVans cater to almost every e-commerce player.

<https://www.mellowvans.com/>

STROOM

The STROOM - Greater Stellenbosch Trust (GST) partnership is driving a shift towards zero-emission deliveries in South Africa by expanding the use of cargo e-bikes in townships and cities. Its key objectives include testing and refining sustainable e-bike leasing models, developing educational programs for local entrepreneurs, and integrating e-bikes into urban logistics.

<https://p4gpartnerships.org/pioneering-green-partnerships/all-p4g-partnerships/stroom-greater-stellenbosch-trust>



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