

Alleviating Poverty in South Africa – A Theoretical Overview of the Expanded Public Works Program

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ABSTRACT Poverty alleviation is a challenge facing most developing countries. This paper reports on one national government strategy, namely the Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) which was implemented in South Africa (SA) to primarily address poverty and unemployment in rural areas. The paper sketches the journey from the projects of the national Department of Public Works (DPW) aimed at poverty alleviation, to general community-based public works programs, and finally to the EPWP. After providing the background to the SA government's poverty alleviation strategy, the discussion hones in on the EPWP, its organization, focus, operational plan and training framework. The discussion culminates in a brief explanation of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the EPWP.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, unemployment and resultant poverty were identified as the most significant threats to South Africa's new democracy, since approximately 40 percent of working-age people were unemployed, with a strong weighting amongst the youth (NDPW EPWP Five-Year Report 2009). In September 2003, 4.6 million people were unemployed, in terms of the strict definition of unemployment and, 8.3 million in terms of the broad definition. In the 16-34 age groups, 70 percent of the unemployed had never worked, while 59 percent of all unemployed people had never worked (Mahlatsi 2007). The aforementioned also reported that according to the broad definition of unemployment, 41.2 percent of Africans were unemployed in 2004, of whom 51.4 percent were in the 16-24 years age category, and 35.3 percent in the 25-35 years age group, which represents the largest portion of the economically active population. In line with the RSA Poverty and Inequality Report (1998) which emphasizes the strong link between poverty and unemployment, Swanepoel and De Beer (2006) assert that "unemployment is both a cause and a result of the poverty situations in which people find themselves". Additional factors impacting on unemployment levels in South Africa were the country's exposure to the effects of the rapid globalization that occurred simultaneously with the advent of democracy, and the fact that previous education practices had

left most working people either under-skilled or unskilled (NDPW EPWP Five-Year Report 2009). The most important socio-economic challenges faced by government after the second democratic elections were to reduce unemployment, alleviate poverty, strengthen the general skills base; and improve social services (NDPW EPWP Five-Year Report 2009). Several researchers inter-alia, Black et al. (2004) argue that access to quality employment is an essential means of achieving sustainable livelihoods, which in turn reduces poverty and inequality. Loots (1997) argued that an effective, successful process of poverty eradication is only achievable through co-ordinated government strategies and action.

In response to the above scenario, the South African government invested billions in infrastructure delivery (NDPW EPWP Five Year Report 2009), notably in the construction and property sectors, which had the potential to create numerous jobs. The Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) is one of the South African government's initiatives to bridge the gap between the growing economy and the large numbers of unskilled and unemployed people who have yet to fully enjoy the benefits of economic development. It is also one element within a broader government strategy designed to reduce poverty through the alleviation and reduction of unemployment (NDPW EPWP Incentive Grant Manual 2011:10).

In light of the above, the objectives of this paper are to report on one national government

strategy, namely the Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) which was implemented in South Africa (SA) to primarily address poverty and unemployment in rural areas. Furthermore, the paper is intended to sketch the journey from the projects of the national Department of Public Works (DPW) aimed at poverty alleviation, to general community-based public works programs, and finally to the EPWP. Finally, the intention is to provide the background to the SA government's poverty alleviation strategy, and hone the discussion on the EPWP, its organization, focus, operational plan and training framework.

Background to the SA Government's Poverty Alleviation Strategy

The SA government's Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) is an integrated, coherent socio-economic and social development policy framework which sought to mobilize all South Africans and the country's resources to eradicate apartheid and build a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society. It proposed job creation through public works, that is, the building of houses and provision of services in a way that they would create employment. The policy program to meet basic needs targeted the disadvantaged (Du Toit et al. 1998). Table 1 indicates that the RDP goal of job creation through the public works programs gave birth to the EPWP, which is the focus of this paper.

Phillips et al. (2009) report that in 2003, the South African National Treasury carried out a review of the Special Poverty Relief Allocation

(SPRA) program which had funded the Community-Based Public Works Program (CBPWP). The review revealed that the existence of a special fund with its own allocation processes had resulted in a number of unintended consequences, primarily, inter-governmental fiscal anomalies and a tendency for departments to use the fund to engage in activities which were not part of their functional mandates. Thus, the South African Government approved the following recommendations of the review, namely, that the SPRA be closed down, some of the SPRA-funded programs, such as the Community-Based Public Works Program (CBPWP) should no longer be funded; and, that the SPRA budgets should become part of the budgets of line-functional departments. The design of the EPWP was strongly influenced by the results of the SPRA review, and henceforth the EPWP projects and programs had to be funded from the budgets of the line function departments, provinces and municipalities.

The Expanded Public Works Program

According to the National Department of Public Works (NDPW) Third Quarter Report (2007), the EPWP is a direct response to one of the agreements reached at the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) in 2003. This summit brought the different social partners together to address the causes of unemployment. Government, business, labour and the community constituency agreed to a range of steps to address the economic problems facing South Africa. It was also agreed that the priority was addressing unemployment.

Table 1: Reconstruction and development goals and the EPWP

<i>RDP goals</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Housing</i>	Provide well-located and affordable shelter for all by 2003. Build one million houses in five years.
<i>Water</i>	Supply 20 to 30l of clean water each day to every person in two years and 50 to 60; per day within five years from a point no more than 200 meters from each dwelling.
<i>Electricity</i>	Supply 2.5 million more households and all schools and clinics with electricity by the year 2000.
<i>Health Care</i>	Give free medical care to children under the age of six and to homeless children; improve maternity care for women; organize programs to prevent and treat major diseases like TB and AIDS.
<i>Land Reform</i>	Implement land reform based on redistribution of residential and productive land to those who need it but cannot afford it and restitution to those who lost land because of apartheid laws.
<i>Job Creation Through Public Works</i>	Introduce a national public works program to provide basic needs such as water supply, sewerage and roads and at the same time create jobs, particularly in poor and rural areas.

Source: Republic of South Africa (1994). The White Paper on Reconstruction Development Program (RDP)

The GDS adopted a number of interventions to reduce household poverty and vulnerability, including public investment initiatives, sector partnerships and strategies, local procurement, small enterprise promotion, support for cooperatives and the EPWP (Third Quarter Report 2007). The GDS Agreement states that, *“EPWPs can provide poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out socially-useful activities. These EPWP projects will be designed to equip participants with a modicum of training and work experience, which should enhance their ability to earn a living in future”* (GDS Agreement 2003).

Following the GDS, the former President of South Africa, Mr Thabo Mbeki pronounced in the 2003 State of the Nation Address that “the government has decided that an EPWP should be launched. This was to ensure the drawing of significant numbers of unemployed into productive work and seeing that those workers gain skills while they work, and thus take an important step to get out of the pool of those who are marginalized” (Mbeki, State of the Nation Address 2003). Furthermore, the South African president announced in the 2004 State of the Nation Address that the EPWP aimed to create at least one million work opportunities in its first five years (Mbeki, State of the Nation Address 2004).

The South African government approved the conceptual framework of the EPWP in November 2003 (ILO 2009:1), and the Program was officially launched by former President, Thabo Mbeki, on 18 May 2004 at Sekhunyani, Giyani, in the Limpopo Province (EPWP Five Year Report 2009). The immediate goal of the Phase 1 of the EPWP was to help alleviate unemployment by creating at least one million work opportunities (Phillips et al. 2009).

According to Phillips (2004), the EPWP is a cross-cutting program implemented by all spheres of government and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). It is a nation-wide program which aims to draw significant numbers of the unemployed people into productive work, so that workers gain skills while they work, and increase their capacity to earn an income. The objective of the EPWP is to utilize public sector budgets to alleviate unemployment by creating temporary, productive employment opportunities coupled with training. The EPWP is founded on existing best-practice government infrastructure and social programs either by deepening their

labour absorption or extending them. The EPWP’s goal is to create a minimum of one million new work opportunities in South Africa over the first five years of implementation, of which at least 40 percent would be for women, 30 percent for youth and 2 percent for people with disabilities (NDPW Third Quarter Report 2007). Therefore, an overriding objective of the program was to ensure the drawing of significant numbers of unemployed people into productive work in order to gain skills while working, and be enabled to become economically active and productive members of society in the long term (NDPW EPWP Five-Year Report 2009).

According to the National Department of Public Works (NDPW) the EPWP Five-Year Report (2009), local, provincial and national government departments involved in infrastructure provision were tasked with taking steps to increase the levels of employment in infrastructure projects. The success of the EPWP depends on inter-governmental coordination and cooperation to mobilize the three spheres of government to create jobs (EPWP Infrastructure Sector Incentive Grant Manual 2009). Thus, the EPWP management should ensure that the provisions of Chapter 3 of the South Africa Constitution (1996), which stipulates that *“the principle of the three spheres working in concert is more likely to address challenges facing the country, than if they were to act separately or even in competition”*.

The EPWP endorses the use of labour-intensive methods of construction (LIC) and skills development. It aims to reduce unemployment by stimulating economic growth through improved skills levels and providing an enabling environment for industry to flourish.

When the first phase of the EPWP was designed, line-function national, provincial and municipal budgets were assessed in order to identify potential areas for job creation through Public Works Programs. Three main areas were identified, namely, the continuation of the National Public Works Program (NPWP), using labour-intensive construction approaches in public infrastructure projects; programs aimed at protecting or enhancing the environment; and programs aimed at providing needed social services which were not yet being provided at their potential level, and which could be provided by semi-skilled labour (Phillips et al. 2009:18). Table 2 depicts the sectors that were identified as hav-

ing the potential to create EPWP employment opportunities, as well as the sectors' responsibility.

The EPWP Focus

While many government projects and programs create employment, not all are classified as EPWP projects or programs. Given the wide variety of projects implemented by government, it is not always easy to distinguish between EPWP projects and non-EPWP projects (NDPW EPWP Infrastructure Sector Incentive Grant Manual 2009:8). The following characteristics of EPWP projects are highlighted, namely, that they employ large numbers of local, low-skilled, unemployed persons who are willing to work and are defined as the EPWP target group; they are highly labour-intensive; and they provide a service to, or develop an asset, for the community.

Since the focus of this study is the DPW and more specifically it's EPWP, it is important to examine the DPW-defined EPWP projects and programs described in the Department of Labour, Code of Good Practice (2002), which includes deliberate attempts by the public sector body to use expenditure or goods and services to create additional work opportunities, coupled with training for the unemployed and emerging enterprises; projects usually employ workers on a temporary basis (either by government, by contractors, or by other non-governmental organizations), under the employment conditions described in the Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works Programs (SPWPs) and the Ministerial Determination regarding conditions of employment on SPWPs issued by the Department of Labour; the public sector body's attempts to define and facilitate exit strategies for workers when they leave the program, and to build bridges between the second economy and the first economy.

The EPWP Institutional Arrangements

The DPW was mandated by Cabinet to lead the inter-departmental implementation of the EPWP (NDPW Third Quarter Report 2007). Although the overall coordination of the program is the DPW's responsibility, the program is led by a sector co-ordinating department in each of the four sectors as reflected in Table 3. The economic, environmental, and social sectors are coordinated by the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs and the Department of Social Development, respectively.

The Department of Labour (DoL) funds the training programs for the EPWP beneficiaries, and oversees an EPWP Training Committee, which is made up of representatives of all the sector coordinating departments. All provinces have set up provincial EPWP Steering Committees and Sector Coordinating Committees for the environment, and social and infrastructure sectors, which meet on a monthly basis (NDWP EPWP Five Year Report 2009). As the main delivery arms of government, provinces and municipalities are the primary EPWP project implementing bodies, they receive the necessary support from the national government departments responsible for sectoral coordination. The national sector coordinating departments are required to provide regular reports to Cabinet on progress in implementing the EPWP in each sector.

In 2004 a special EPWP unit was created in the DPW (National level) under the leadership of a Deputy Director-General, to manage the above responsibilities and to coordinate activities within the infrastructure sector (NDWP EPWP Five Year Report 2009). As the overall coordinating department, the DPW has the following roles and responsibilities, and as a general coordinating department, the DPW is re-

Table 2: EPWP sectors

<i>EPWP sector</i>	<i>Sector's responsibility</i>
<i>Infrastructure</i>	Increasing the labour-intensity of government-funded infrastructure projects;
<i>Environment</i>	Creating work opportunities in public environmental improvement programs;
<i>Social</i>	Creating work opportunities in public social programs, for example, home-based care workers and ECD workers; and
<i>Economic</i>	Income-generating projects and programs to utilize government expenditure on goods and services to provide the work experience component of small enterprise learnership and /or incubation programs.

Source: NDPW Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of the EPWP (2005).

sponsible for overall monitoring and evaluation, providing progress reports to the SA Cabinet, promoting linkages between sectors, establishing common support programs and common monitoring, evaluation and exit strategies, training frameworks and supportive guidelines, providing support by facilitating common programs across sectors (for example, access to credit for learner entrepreneurs), and assisting other sectoral coordinating departments to develop sectoral plans (NDWP EPWP Five Year Report 2009). The sector co-ordinating departments have the following roles and responsibilities, namely, to champion the EPWP in the sector, liaise with other departments and stakeholders in the sector, consult with the other public bodies in the sector and produce a sectoral plan to identify areas for the expansion of EPWP approaches, set targets for expansion, and describe how the expansion is going to be achieved, facilitate the satisfaction of common needs in the sector (for example, sectoral training and qualifications frameworks, sectoral guidelines), monitor implementation against the sectoral plan, and produce sectoral progress reports for the DPW.

The EPWP Operational Plan and Operational Framework

All departments and their programs are required to have strategic plans. While the strategic plan is a very broad, overarching statement of intent, the operational plan is the annual work plan of the department, the Chief Directorate and all other components (DPSA *EPMDS Framework 2007*). An operational plan forms the basis and justification for the annual operating budget request. It further provides a plan for resource allocation in line with policy directives and strategic priorities and, must be linked to departmental goals, strategic objectives and measurable performance objectives (Handbook on Performance Management and Development 2000). According to the NDPW's EPWP Five-Year Report (2009), the conceptualization of the EPWP was completed in November 2003, and implementation commenced in April 2004. The program was conceptualized as a long-term program with set targets for the first five years. The Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works Programs (SPWPs) was formally gazetted by the Department of Labour (DoL) in 2002. It established a Public Works Program (PWP) employ-

ment framework based on the PWP model to provide unemployed people with work experience, coupled with training. It included the following provisions (Code of Good Practice 2002), namely, targets for the employment of youth, women and people living with disabilities on PWPs, a requirement that relevant community-based organizations (CBOs) be consulted regarding the selection of workers to be employed on contracts; special conditions of employment for workers employed by contractors on labour-intensive projects, including the use of task-based payment systems, the setting of payments for tasks based on consideration of the local going rate for unskilled labour, and a limit on the duration of employment under the special conditions; and that PWP workers are entitled to training.

In view of the above, it is apparent that the Code of Good Practice (2002) is the cornerstone of the employment framework. The GDS Agreement (2003) also emphasized that relevant and targeted training should form a central component of the EPWP to ensure that workers attain relevant and marketable skills. The GDS Agreement suggested that training programs should focus on the following: Adult Basic Education Training (ABET); HIV/AIDS Awareness; Health and Safety; Social Entrepreneurship; Industrial Relations; Vocation Skills, for example, construction and agriculture; Life Skills; Entrepreneurship and Project management; Community Development; Project-specific Skills; and Cooperatives Training. The EPWP Guidelines (2005) serve as a guiding framework for the implementation of labour-intensive projects. They set guidelines for the implementation of labour-intensive works under the most common delivery model, namely "design by employer" (that is, the contractor undertakes construction on the basis of full designs issued by the employer). In addition, the RSA EPWP Guidelines (2005) provide guidance in respect of the identification of suitable projects, appropriate design for labour-intensive construction, specification of labour-intensive works, and the compilation of contract documentation for labour-intensive projects.

According to the RSA EPWP Guidelines (2005), the employment of local, temporary workers on all EPWPs labour-intensive infrastructure projects has to be in line with the Code of Good Practice for Employment and Conditions of Work for Special Public Works Programs is-

sued in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No 75 of 1997) and promulgated in the Government Gazette, Notice No 6 of January 2002. In this regard the public body has the responsibilities outlined below.

Selection of Projects

The public body must implement the following types of civil infrastructure projects in a labour-intensive manner: low-volume roads; sidewalks and non-motorized transport infrastructure; storm water drainage and trenching. However, the EPWP Guidelines may be used for labour-intensive projects other than the types of civil infrastructure projects specified above, as long as such projects involve a significant substitution of labour for machinery.

Setting of Rate of Pay

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Employment and Conditions of Work for SPWPs, the public body must set a rate of pay (task-rate) for workers employed on labour-intensive projects. The following factors should be considered when setting rates of pay, namely, the rate set should take into account wages paid for comparable unskilled work in the local area, per sector if necessary, the rate should be an appropriate wage to provide an incentive to work, to reward effort and to ensure a reasonable quality of work, and men, women, disabled persons and the aged must receive the same pay for work of equal value (EPWP Guidelines 2005).

Appointment of Consulting Engineers and Contractors

According to the EPWP Guidelines (2005:3), the public body must ensure that the design of the labour-intensive works by consultants is overseen by persons in their employ who have completed the necessary skills training, works contracts are administered by persons in the employ of consultants who have completed the necessary skills training, and works contracts are awarded to contractors who have managers in their employ who have completed the necessary skills training.

Furthermore, the EPWP Guidelines (2005) stipulate some of the following important provisions, namely, the consultant must design and

implement the construction works in accordance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of Labour Intensive projects under the Expanded Public Works Program (the Guidelines) published by the National Department of Public Works, and the consultant shall, for monitoring purposes, keep monthly records of, and transmit to the client, data on some of the following indicators with regard to workers employed: project budget; actual project expenditure; number of job opportunities created; demographics of workers employed (disaggregated into women, youth and persons with disabilities); minimum day-task wage rate earned on project; number of person-days of employment created; and the number of persons who have attended a standard EPWP ten-day accredited training course.

In line with the objectives of the EPWP, training is critical for the successful implementation of the program. According to the Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works Programs, gazetted by the Department of Labour, beneficiaries should receive at least two days of training for every 22 days worked. The Guidelines for the Implementation of Labour-Intensive Infrastructure Projects also require that managers of labour-intensive projects be trained in order to build capacity to manage EPWP projects at the required scale (NDPW EPWP Third Quarterly Report 2006). The training for both staff and beneficiaries is examined in this study.

The EPWP Logical Framework

The EPWP Logical Framework (2004) outlines the goal, purpose and objectives of the EPWP, which are reflected in Table 3.

Table 4 reflects the programme indicators defined by EPWP Guidelines (2005).

Funding the EPWP

According to the NDPW's EPWP Five-Year Report (2009), in 2003 the South African government took the decision to fund poverty relief through normal budgeting processes. This followed a review of poverty relief programs, which determined that separate budgeting processes for these programs caused a number of quandaries, which included amongst other things, spheres of government becoming involved in work that did not form part of their core constitutional function and tensions in inter-govern-

Table 3: Outline of the EPWP logical framework

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Goal</i>	To alleviate unemployment for a minimum of one million people in South Africa, of which at least 40% should be women, 30% youth and 2% disabled, between 2004 and 2009.
<i>Purpose</i>	To achieve this goal, the government would: • Over the first five years of the program create temporary work opportunities and income for at least one million unemployed people; • Provide needed public goods and services, through the use of labour intensive methods, at acceptable standards, through mainly public sector resources, private and public sector implementation capacity; and • Increase the potential of participants to earn a future income by providing work experience, training and information related to local work opportunities, further education and training and SMME development.
<i>Objectives</i>	This would be achieved by creating work opportunities in the following four sectors: • Increasing the labour intensity of government-funded infrastructure projects; • Creating work opportunities in public environmental programs (for example, Working for Water); • Creating work opportunities in public social programs (for example, community care workers); and • Utilizing general government expenditure on goods and services to provide the work experience component of small enterprise learnership/incubation programs.
<i>Target</i>	The program would target the unemployed and marginalized, among others, namely: • Unemployed, able and willing to work • Largely unskilled; • People not receiving social grants; • The poor; • Women; • People living with disabilities; and • Youth, of which an estimated 70% were unemployed at the time.

Source: Adapted from the NDPW EPWP Consolidated Program Overview and Logical Framework (2004).

mental fiscal relationships. As part of the main decision to fund the EPWP, it was further resolved that government should carry out poverty-relief programs in their core functional areas. Thus, the EPWP was not allocated a special budget for projects, rather it was funded through the budgets of line departments, provinces and municipalities. The funds for EPWP programs were allocated to national departments, provinces and municipalities through the normal budgeting process (Consolidated Program Overview and Logical Framework 2004). For the period 2004-2009, R15 billion of the allocation to the infrastructure sector was set aside for the EPWP. This formed part of the conditional infrastructure grants allocated to provinces and municipalities. Furthermore, R4 billion of the environment sector departments' budgets were earmarked for environmental EPWP programs in the same period, while R600 million was assigned to social sector EPWP programs. According to the Consolidated Program Overview and Logical Framework (2004), it was projected that this funding would create one million work opportunities of varying duration. The Provincial Infrastruc-

ture Grant reserved for the EPWP (2004/5-2008/9), made one third of the Provincial Infrastructure Budget (total budget allocation) available to reach EPWP targets. The NDPW EPWP Five-Year Report (2009) points out that, whilst the decentralized approach to funding was designed to ensure coordination and implementation, it enabled the EPWP to access varied and much larger resources and to be undertaken on a greater scale.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The EPWP Monitoring and Evaluation (M and E) Framework is comprised of the monitoring indicators which were consolidated into the reporting systems of the respective EPWP sectors. Table 5 reflects the objectives that were identified for the EPWP, which were guided by the central objectives of redressing unemployment and poverty. The NDPW Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (2005) endorses the view that the evaluation of the EPWP, as a short-to-medium-term measure is imperative in order to mitigate the adverse social, political and eco-

Table 4: Program indicators

<i>Program indicators</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Person-Days of Employment Created Job Opportunities</i>	The number of people who worked on project times (x) the number of days each person worked. One job opportunity = paid work created for an individual on an EPWP project for any period of time. In the case of social sector projects, learnerships also constitute job opportunities.
<i>Project Wage</i>	The minimum daily wage rate = the daily wage (whether task-rated or time-rated) per individual project. This wage rate must be included in the project tender documents at all times, as per the EPWP Guidelines.
<i>Training Person-Days</i>	The DoL agreed to offer an EPWP life skills course. The number of training per person-days achieved by attending this course (or course modules) needs to be captured on an on-going basis. This also applies to any other courses provided. The number of training person-days is calculated as follows: the number of people who attended training times (x) the number of days training. For any other training, one training day equates to at least seven hours of formal training. It is, however, important to draw a distinction between accredited and non-accredited training person-days.
<i>Project Budget</i>	The project budget = the price tendered by the contractor plus the professional fees for the service provider appointed to design and supervise the project. The project budget excludes government management and administration costs.
<i>Actual Expenditure</i>	Actual expenditure relates to the expenditure on the project by the contractor plus the expenditure by the professional service provider appointed to design and supervise the project. The actual expenditure excludes expenditure on government management and administration.
<i>Demographic Characteristics of Workers</i>	The number of workers that fall within the following categories must be recorded: youth (18-35 years of age); women; and people with disabilities.

Source: Adapted from the NDPW EPWP Guidelines (2005)

nomic consequences of high and growing levels of unemployment. It does however, point out that all evaluations should be executed in a manner that takes cognizance of the fact that the EPWP is merely one element within a broader government strategy to alleviate poverty.

The theoretical overview of the EPWP in South Africa sketched the background and ra-

tionale of the program, and reviewing its objectives, structure and management. It needs to be emphasized that the EPWP initiative and strategy of SA government is not alien to Africa, since Thwala (2011) reports that in the 1960s, three countries in North Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, experimented with such programs. For example, according to Jallal (2007), Promotion

Table 5: EPWP objectives to be monitored and evaluated

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Measure</i>
Over the first five years to create temporary work opportunities and income for at least one million unemployed South Africans;	Total number of job opportunities created for women, youth and the disabled; Person-days of work created; and Average income of EPWP participants per sector.
To provide much-needed labour-intensive public goods and services at acceptable standards, through the use of mainly public sector budgets and public and private sector implementation capacity;	Cost of goods and services provided at an acceptable standard in the infrastructure, environment and culture, and social sectors; and Cost of each job created.
To increase the potential for at least 14% of public works participants to earn a future income by providing work experience, training and information related to local work opportunities, further education and training and SMME development.	Percentage of participants at point of exit who secure employment, education or training, or start an SMME.

Source: Adapted from the NDPW Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of the EPWP (2005)

National (PN) in Morocco is an autonomous public entity charged with mobilizing underemployed or unemployed workers to implement labour-intensive projects using rudimentary technology.

Furthermore, there is vast international experience of PWP, ranging from small programs to very large-scale initiatives (Phillips 2004). Some low- and middle-income countries such as Argentina have used public works programs to great effect, absorbing more than 20 percent of the labour force and offering guaranteed employment to job seekers (Kobokana 2007). McCord (2003) cites the examples of the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme in India and the New Deal Program during the Great Depression in the United States of America (USA). Both programs managed to absorb more than 30 percent of the unemployed.

According to McCord (2007), the success of job creation programs is conventionally measured in terms of their impact on the well-being of participants while they are enrolled in the program, and/or after they have left the program. However, an assessment of the impact of the program on the EPWP beneficiaries is not one of the primary objectives of this paper, but should be pursued to ascertain the impact the specific EPWP on poverty alleviation and employment creation.

CONCLUSION

This paper reported on one national government strategy, namely the Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) which was implemented in South Africa (SA) to primarily address poverty and unemployment in rural areas. The paper sketched the journey from the projects of the national Department of Public Works (DPW) aimed at poverty alleviation, to general community-based public works programs, and finally to the EPWP. After providing the background to the SA government's poverty alleviation strategy, the discussion honed in on the EPWP, its organization, focus, operational plan and training framework. The discussion culminated in a brief explanation of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the EPWP.

It would seem that the South African government has solid policies and strategies in place to address poverty and unemployment in the rural areas. What is more important is that there

seems to be consolidation of various attempts to address the challenges of rural poverty and unemployment at both national and provincial and district levels and funding has been centralized for easier monitoring and evaluation. Obviously there are also important lessons to be learnt from international countries' experiences, which lessons should inform the SA program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is most important for the SA government to undertake periodic formal reviews and assessments to determine the impact the EPWP has on poverty alleviation and skills development, as remedial measures may not only be necessary, but the reviews may indicate whether other strategies should be considered which can be more effective in addressing unemployment and poverty alleviation.

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