



Public Employment Programmes and their contribution to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa

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Declaration

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Abstract

Public Employment Programmes (PEPs) are considered an important and widespread social protection tool to address the challenges of persistent unemployment and dire poverty. They provide a 'win-win' policy option through job creation, while ensuring that assets are created and services are delivered. In South Africa, the government implements the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), a countrywide PEP initiative which aims to provide job opportunities and income transfer to unemployed people through productive work in the delivery of community services and the creation of public assets, and thereby contributing to community development. This is similar to PEPs elsewhere in the world. The impact of PEPs in South Africa has mostly been measured based on their contributions to employment opportunities. However, this creates a gap in the holistic measurement of the EPWP, as its contribution to service delivery and asset creation by which people sustain their livelihoods is not given as much attention. This study's objective was to evaluate and critically assess the role of PEPs and their contribution to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa.

A qualitative research method was adopted, using both the purposive and snowball sampling strategies. Program Theory Evaluation (PTE) and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework were applied as the underpinning theoretical frameworks for this investigation. The study found that the EPWP has positively contributed to service delivery and improvement in rural livelihoods in South Africa. This was revealed by the three categories of research participants representing EPWP workers, community informants, and government officials who are part of and play a role in programme coordination and implementation. However, the study also revealed challenges facing the programme. These include the flouting of some regulations governing the programme, such as the payment of participants below the minimum wage rate, interference in the recruitment of job-seekers, lack of proper planning, and inadequate human resources to coordinate the programme from the EPWP implementing bodies. Furthermore, the study noted the struggle to achieve the youth target by the programme, despite the soaring South Africa's rate of youth unemployment.

On the basis of these findings, the study makes key recommendations to be considered in addressing these challenges. They include the introduction of a national EPWP policy with enforcement mechanisms, an improvement in the capacity of public bodies to coordinate and implement the programme, the introduction of youth-focused programmes, and scaling up the existing programmes. Finally, the study recommends that the government reconsider and re-evaluate the EPWP in light of the current prevailing conditions of unemployment.

Iqoqa

Uhlelo Lwezemisebenzi Yomphakathi seluthathwa njengethuluzi elibaluleke kakhulu futhi eselisetshenziswa ezindaweni eziningi ukuvikele inhlalakahle yomphakathi kanye nokubhekana nezinsalelo zamazinga aphezulu okwentuleka kwemisebenzi nobubha. Loluhlelo lukhobisa impumelelo nhlangothi zonke kwinqubo mgomo, ngoba ngesikhathi luletha amathuba emisebenzi lubuye futhi lufeze izidingo zokwethulwa kosizo kanye nengqalazisinda emphakathini. ENingizumu Afrika, uHulumeni wethula Uhlelo Lwezemisebenzi Yemiphakathi Olwengeziwe njengohlelo lukazwelonke oluhlose ukuletha amathuba emisebenzi yethutshana kulabo abangasebenzi bese bethola imadlana ewumholo ekulethweni kwengqalazisinda kanye nosizo emphakathini oluholela okuthuthukeni kwemiphakathi. Loluhlelo lwaseNingizumu Afrika luyafana nezinye izinhlelo eziwuloluhlobo ezithulwa kwamanye amazwe. Imiphumela yezinhlelo ezinje eNingizumu Afrika ihlezi icutshungulwa futhi ikalwa kakhulu ngasohlangothini lokulethwa kwamathuba emisebenzi, okwenza kube nesikhewu esivulekayo ekukalweni ngokuphelele kwemiphumela namagalelo aloluHlelo izimpilweni kanye nasenhlalweni yemiphakathi, nokuthi leyongqalazisinda elethwe uHulumeni ngaphansi kwaloluHlelo iyithuthukisa kanjani imiphakathi. Inhloso yalolucwaningo ukubhekangokujulile, uhluze, ucubungule indima edlalwa yiloluhle lukaHulumeni kanye namagalelo alo ekulethweni kwezinsiza kanye nengqalazisinda emphakathi yesemakhaya nakwinhlalo mpilo yawo umphakathi kwizwe lonke lase eNingizumu Afrika.

Lolucwaningo luhlonze indlela yekhwalithethivu njengendlela oluzoqhutshwa ngayo, luphinde lusebenzisa ngofunayo iphaphosivu kanye nesinobholi njengamasu namaqhinga ukuhlonza labo abazoba yingxeye yalo. Lube seluqoka injulalwazi yokubheka nokucwaningwa kwezinhlelo kanye nohlaka ulubhekele ukuthuthukiswa kwezimo zempilo oluqhubekayo njengezinjulalwazi eziwumgogoda walolucwaningo. Ucwanningoke lubeseluveza ukuthi Uhlelo Lwezemisebenzi Yemiphakathi Olwengeziwe lube nemiphumela emihle ekulethweni kwezidingo, iqhlalisizinda Kanye nokwenzancono inhlalompilo yabantu basemakhaya eNingizumu Afrika. Lokho kuvezwe izigaba zontathu zalabo abebebambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo kusukela kwisebenzi zalo belu loluhlelo, izisebenzi zikahulumeni ezengamele loluhlelo kanye namalunga ophakathi aqavile. Kusenjalo, ucwaningo luphinde lwaveza izingqinamba ezibhekene naloluhlelo okubalwa phezukwezinye: ukungalandelwa kwemigomo ulawula loluhlele ikakhulukazi uma kuqashwa abantu okumele bazosebenza, nokungakhokhwa kwamaholo njengalokhu umthetho ubekile; lubuye lwaveza futhi ukuthi akukho ukuhlalelwa kahle okulandelayo izinhlelo ezihambisa loluhlelo, futhi zona lezizinhlelo azinabo abantu abanele ukulwethula loluhlelo ngendlela efanele. Ucwanningo luphinde lwaveza insalelo loluhlelo ebhekene nayo yokungakwazi ukufinyelela ezibalweni ezibekiwe zokuqasha abantu abasha phezu kwezinga eliphezulu kakhulu eNingizumu Afrika lokwentuleka kwemisebenzi kubantu abasha.

Uma sekulandelwa, kubhekwa imiphumela yalolucwaningo, umcwaningi wethula leziziphakamiso ekusizeni ezindwani lapho inzinsalelo sivezwekhona. Leziziphakamiso zifaka ngaphezukokunye ukwethulwa komgomo kazwelonke obhekelele loluhlelo ozoba nezindlela namandla wokuthi labo abasemagunyeni bangenelele uma kukhona okungahambi kahle; kuphinde kuthuthukiswe inani labantu kanye nezinsiza ekwethuleni loluhlelo ezinhlelo zonke zikahulumeni ezibambe iqhaza kuloluhlelo; ucwaningi luphinde luphakamise ukuthi izinhlelo eziqonde ngqo kubantu abasha zibekwe eqhulwini zethulwe, bese kuthi lezi ezikhona zikhushulwe uma kuya kwinani labantu okumele maqashwe. Ekugcineni ucwaningo

luphakamisa ukuthi uHulumeni aphinde alubukisise kabanzi loluhle ngenjongo yokuliyamanisa nesikhathi isiphila kuso kanye nezinselelo ezikhona esikhathini samanje uma uqhathanisa neminyaka esondele emashumini amabili lwasungulwa loluhlelo.

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CHAPTER 1

Study Background and Scope

1.0 Introduction

“Public works or public employment programmes (PWP or PEPs) have for a very long period of time been regarded as an essential means to contribute to social protection and address the challenges of poverty and unemployment” Lal, Miller, Lieuw-Kie-Song, and Kostzer, (2010:38). Furthermore, McCord (2005) attests that PEPs are considered an important and widespread social protection tool during challenges of persistent unemployment and dire poverty, and they provide a ‘win-win’ policy option through job creation, while ensuring that assets are created and services are delivered to communities. For the purpose of this investigation, the terms “public works” and “public employment” programmes are used interchangeably to denote the same type of job creation interventions. In South Africa, similar to other PEPs globally, the government implements the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Since the advent of freedom, the South African government has emphasised combating poverty and creating new jobs. In pursuance of these objectives, in 2003, the government with its social partners (business, labour and civil society) called for a Growth and Development Summit (GDS). The Summit revolved around many themes, and one of these themes was “More jobs, better jobs, decent work for all” Nedlac, (2003:3), which led to the EPWP in its current form as a South Africa’s PEP. The main aim of the programme was to offer a path “for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households in the short-to-medium term” (ibid).

Farrington, Carney, Ashley, and Turton (1999) claims that the criteria to measure poverty has mostly been people’s levels of income or their consumption patterns or levels. As a result, through these criteria, “a person is poor only if his/her income level is below the defined poverty line, or if consumption falls below a stipulated minimum” Amare and Araya, (2008:338). This demonstrates that poverty is assessed mainly on material conditions, without considering a set of intertwined influences, such as societal seclusion, susceptibility, physical vulnerability and helplessness, which are features of a lack of sustainable livelihoods. According to Parkinson and Ramirez (2007:32), the word “sustainable” denotes the features of a livelihood that can withstand numerous shockwaves and unexpected events that are most likely to be faced in the environment and to evade taking part in a long-term reduction of natural resources. Contrary to the standard measure of poverty using income and consumption, these are not the only key factors that poor people consider when they are asked about poverty and its meaning to them. Farrington *et al.* (1999) asserts that they identify a wide range of facets and features, and income is only a part of those aspects. Some include levels of insecurity or defencelessness, and an inability to voice their issues freely, either in the community or to members of their household or even to the government. Some also include aspects relating to health, levels of education, and access to key public infrastructure and assets. The majority of these aspects are heavily dependent on the levels, scope and quality of services rendered to communities.

Assessing the contributions of PEPs to service delivery is thus critical due to the influence it has on the lives and livelihoods of rural communities. It will also provide a balanced picture compared to the traditional approach to poverty measures used in the past, namely, the measurement of poverty based on income and employment, as Farrington *et al.* (1999) contends.

1.1 Background to the Study

In South Africa, the government implements the EPWP. “The EPWP is a nationwide government-led initiative with the objective of providing work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through labour intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development” (EPWP, 2017a). According to Wong (2017:9), “South Africa’s EPWP is a pioneer in different aspects”, for example, by adopting a social service dimension, through the implementation of programmes that promote and support the development of children in the early stages, and those that help elderly, sick and frail members of the community.

Around the world, many terms are used to describe different kinds of special employment programmes implemented by governments with the primary purpose of creating employment in order to tackle the soaring levels of unemployment and or underemployment in society. Historically, such programmes were often called public works programmes (PWP) – and many still are. The context of such programmes was limited to the realms of infrastructure development. Hence, the concept of ‘works’ is often referred to as infrastructural outputs. Over time, however, the nature of the work undertaken in such programmes has significantly diversified, particularly the introduction of various forms of social and other service work undertaken as part of the spectrum of work in such programmes. According to Lal et al. (2010), this led to the International Labour Organization (ILO) using the term “public employment programmes” (PEPs) as the generic term instead of “public works programmes” (PWPs). This is to reflect that the work outputs through such programmes have now begun to include services.

Thwala (2008), citing Abedian and Standish (1986), affirms that the history of PEPs dates back to some decades ago, and even industrialised nations have used PWPs as a tool in their economic policies. For example, in fiscal policy, public spending was expanded, and more people are employed in such programmes as a lever to balance domestic demand or contract public spending, and thereby reduce joblessness in the short-to-medium term. Fourie (2006) further claims that during the early 1930s, as part of the government policy to eradicate white poverty, South Africa implemented a PWP as a corrective measure for the poor white phenomenon, as recommended by Carnegie Commission set up to investigate the causes, consequences and measures to address this in 1932. PWPs increased employment for Whites, according to Seekings (2006) and Abedian and Standish (1986, cited by McCord, 2005).

In South Africa, post 1994, the Government of National Unity (GNU) commenced a programme called the National Public Works Programme (NPWP) as a PEP. This programme comprised key elements to address the challenges of unemployment and provide services, especially to areas that were neglected by the apartheid government. Those elements included a labour-intensive approach to provide public goods and services. This became a key component of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), introduced later by the government (McCord, 2005; Thwala, 2008). However, the programme had its shortcomings, as outlined in the report by Abedian and Standish (1986, cited by McCord, 2005). The leading reasons for the failure of the NPWP were that: 1) the rate of implementation was insufficient to reach the majority of unemployed people and meet their needs; 2) the programme was not introduced in a coherent manner; 3) inappropriate technology was used in the programme; 4) often the programme did not follow any particular structure or was not linked to any developmental policy and so its introduction was on a temporary basis; 5) there was no backing provided to the programme administratively; 6) project post maintenance was not provided; and 7) the programme has a strong dependence on the government’s commitment in terms of funding, leading to a lack of financial backing (ibid).

The NPWP was later replaced by the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) as an employment and poverty alleviation initiative (Phillips, 2004). But as the name suggests (with the use of the word “works”), the CBPWP was contextualised to develop infrastructure with labour drawn from the local community. Phillips (2004) further indicated that at the African National Congress (ANC) Policy Conference in late 2002, a resolution was taken that aimed to broaden the scale and magnitude of the CBPWP using labour based methods of construction to address poverty, joblessness and infrastructure backlogs in areas that were not previously serviced. Following the GDS (2003), which resolved to increase the scope and depth of government’s intervention to tackle chronic unemployment, innovative thinking around the concept of PWPs then led to the addition of the word “expanded” to allow for services and goods that government would provide with a labour-intensive approach.

The key issue (as stated above) is that the term ‘public employment programme’ is a generic term for a wide variety of special employment programmes with different design features (Wong, 2017). The EPWP is the name of the coordinating mechanism for such programmes in South Africa. The EPWP (2017a) is “A nationwide government-led initiative with the objective of providing work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through labour intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development”. According to Mfusi (2014), the Programme covers four sectors coordinated by different departments with their own unique programmes that they champion, for example:

- 1) **Infrastructure Sector:** This is the biggest sector in the Programme in terms of work opportunity targets. The Department of Public Works (DPW) lead and coordinates all activities in the sector. One of the key sector objectives is to encourage the usage of labour based approaches in all infrastructure projects where it is economically and practically feasible.
- 2) **Social Sector:** In terms of work opportunity targets, the social sector has the least opportunity targets compared to all other sectors. The Department of Social Development (DSD) leads and coordinates all activities of the sector, with initiatives such as early childhood development programmes, home community based care etc.
- 3) **Non-State Sector (NSS):** This is the second-biggest sector in terms of work opportunity targets in the EPWP. The sector is divided into two main programmes: i) the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) Programme coordinated by the DPW; and ii) the Community Work Programme (CWP), led by the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG).
- 4) **Environment and Culture Sector (E&C):** This is the third-biggest sector in the Programme in terms of work opportunity targets. The Sector is led and coordinated by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). For the E&C sector, the focus is on programmes aimed at protecting the environment. The key programmes include: i) sustainable energy; ii) parks and beautification; and iii) waste management, among others.

Bokolo (2013) holds that the impact of PEPs in South Africa has mostly been measured on its contribution to employment or job creation, which is generally regarded as a quantitative measure of the programme’s contribution. To conduct a qualitative assessment of PEPs, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was applied in this study. As such, it is imperative first to grasp this term and conceptually understand what a sustainable livelihood means and the contribution of the EPWP as a South African PEP to the sustainable livelihoods of communities. Various authors have provided definitions of the concept of sustainable livelihoods. According to Elasha, Elhassan, Ahmed, and Zakieldin (2005), theoretically, livelihoods refer to all forms of actions, privileges and possessions,

including assets that people use to make a living. In this taxonomy, assets are not defined by only looking into their natural or biological features, such as water and land, but also considering their sustainable livelihoods context, which means assets include social components and aspects such as family, social networks, participation, and human capital, including knowledge and talents. Physical assets also form part of the broader definition of assets, such as infrastructure, schools, bridges, roads, etc. Parkinson and Ramirez (2007:13) defined the word sustainable as “both the features of a livelihood” that is able to withstand numerous shockwaves and unexpected challenges most likely to arise in the nature, and to evade taking part in extended degradation of natural resources. So, sustainable livelihoods look at the way people use available resources purposefully to improve their living standards, and how the available resources are affected by the development and the contact people have with these resources.

Farrington *et al.* (1999) note that accessing and measuring sustainable livelihoods is not clear-cut; it is multifaceted and requires broader outlooks and a higher level of cooperation between prevailing interventions. To give greater perspective, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was used in this study to show these linkages.

1.2 Study Problem Statement

The literature reveals that studies conducted on PEPs in general and the EPWP in particular focus on what I referred to as inward-looking and internal effect paradigms of the PEPs for the participants. One defines the inward-looking and internal effect paradigms of PEPs studies as concerned with the “face-value” of the programme found and articulated in the objectives of the 2004 founding Logical Framework for the EPWP Phase I. Three key objectives of the EPWP are outlined: 1) job creation, 2) income transfer, and 3) asset creation and service delivery. Studies on the EPWP sought to assess the programme and evaluate its impact in these three main areas. These studies mainly focused on the summative value of the programme and the interest of the stakeholders, as noted by Heradien (2013). Assessing how effective the programme implementation was, the number of jobs created, and if the programme can be improved were included.

The literature does not provide qualitative results on the programme’s impact in terms of outward-looking and external effect paradigm of the EPWP on communities and their livelihoods. This concept one can define as a broader impact evaluation that does not adopt a narrow view in the programme assessment and evaluation, which only focuses on the three objectives of the programme outlined above. The outward-looking and external effect paradigms go beyond number-counting (i.e. the number of jobs created, kilometres of roads constructed, or number of bridges constructed). These are all the elements of a summative values assessment of the programme. Instead, outward-looking and external effect paradigms look at the programme impact to the community, how the assets created support the community in their livelihoods, and how the projects implemented improve service delivery. This notion was further vouched for by Bokolo (2013), who asserts that the effect of PEPs in South Africa has mostly been measured by their contributions to employment or job creation.

Devereux and Solomon (2006) reveal that there is a shortage of detailed and credible evidence in the literature on the impact of PEPs beyond the summative values across the world. The causes for such, however, can only be speculations as the main focus of such programmes is on job creation and, therefore, little funds are allocated to conducting thorough reviews and evaluations of the programmes’ impact. This gap affects policy design by the government and the allocation of resources to the PEPs because the yardstick used is based on limited factors. It provides a narrow

viewpoint on the contribution of the programme to service delivery, asset creation, and community livelihoods. The absence or lack of evidence related to broad-based measures and assessments of the EPWP means that some communities do not fully recognise and appreciate the contribution of the government to their livelihoods. Dube (2012) pointed out the concern that communities raised that they do not see much meaningful contribution of PWPs and that no significant absorption of people into EPWP jobs takes place. This statement further illustrates that even the community only looks at the EPWP from one angle, namely, job creation. There are no discussions on the actual impact of the programme beyond the number of job opportunities it creates. No assessments of how the assets created through the EPWP have improved the community livelihoods are made. Escudero (2018) argues that in the recent past, there have been very limited critical reviews of these kinds of programmes' impact and experiences, in spite of the fact that several nations have depended on these programme instruments for many years. There is a clear indication in the literature that these programmes can be widely implemented and their impact and benefits increased if a comprehensive assessment of the three fronts presented in an "EPWP 3-sided plane impact" are well understood, as shown in Figure 1 below. Which is further linked to the overall theoretical frameworks for this study discussed in chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

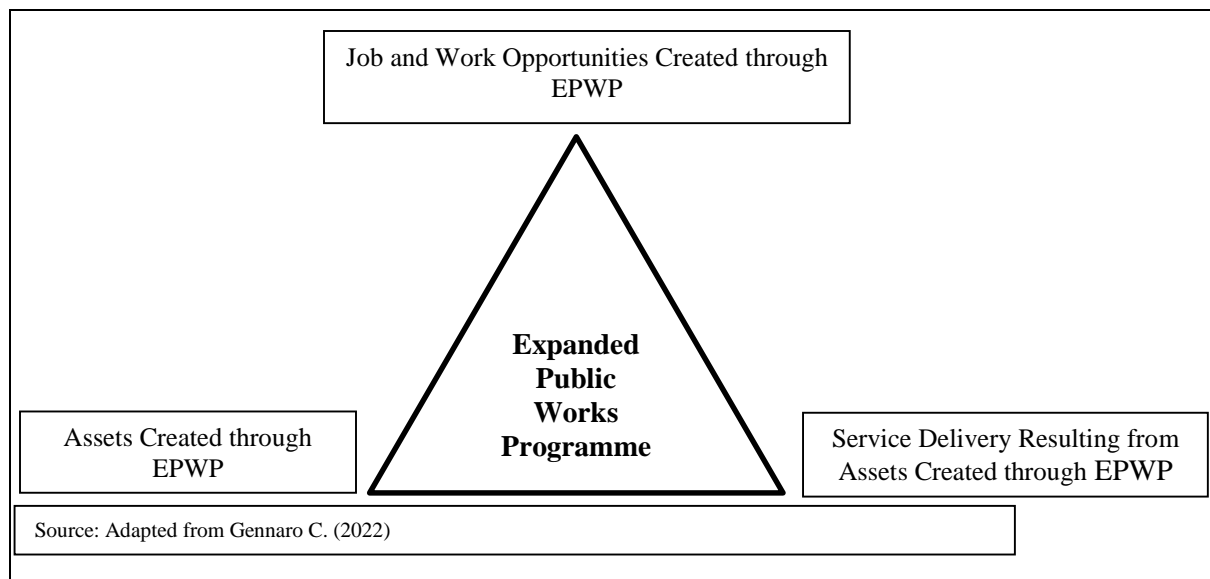


Figure 1: EPWP three-sided plane impact

1.3 Research Questions

In attaining the intended goals for this study, there were critical questions to be asked. These questions were grouped under three broad themes and are listed below:

- 1) How does the EPWP, as a Public Employment Programme, contribute to the delivery of public services in rural areas?
- 2) In what way are the livelihoods of the beneficiaries or employees of the EPWP affected by the Programme?
- 3) What are the implementation challenges of the EPWP and how can these be improved?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Section 1.2 above outlined the existence of a gap in the literature on the assessment and evaluation of PEPs is due to the narrow-focused approach adopted by researchers in their evaluation of PEPs. This is what one referred to as inward-looking and internal effect paradigms in the assessment of PEPs. In order to close this gap, there is a need for an outward-looking and external effect paradigm approach in the evaluation of the EPWP's impact on communities and their livelihoods. This is what Gehrke and Hartwig (2015:45) refer to as the “double-dividends” that PEPs provide.

To achieve that, this study aimed to examine and evaluate the role of the EPWP in contributing to service delivery and the livelihoods of rural communities in South Africa. This was covered under these broad objectives:

- 1) To understand the impact of the assets created through the EPWP to service delivery and to the livelihoods of communities.
- 2) To establish the contribution of the programme to individual participants.
- 3) To assess the programme's implementation challenges and how they can be addressed.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Since the EPWP was inceptioned in 2004 in its current form (i.e. Phase I) until the end of Phase II in 2014, the main performance indicator was the generation of employment opportunities. But slowly, as the third phase started from 2015 onwards, the programme performance focus was expanded to include qualitative factors, such as assets created and services rendered. This study helps in assessing and evaluating the qualitative factors and aspects of the programme. With a renewed focus on the qualitative component of the Programme, an opportunity for evaluators to assess whether or not the programme objectives are met arises (i.e. PEPs contributions to service delivery and asset creation). The findings will assist government in implementing PEPs in future, by suggesting critical programme design aspects, policy and enforcement mechanisms, payment models and monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, the study aimed to contribute with its findings to the expanding body of knowledge on PEPs through broad-based evaluations in the research community.

1.6 Rationale for the Study

The study provides triple benefits to programme participants, the community and government in this manner:

- Firstly, it will assist government or donor organisations in comprehensively understanding the impact of PEPs on service delivery and livelihoods of the participants.
- Secondly, it will reveal how the assets created, or the services delivered impacted the community.
- Lastly, it can show how the programme has directly improved the livelihoods of participants through the income received or skills gained.

The study will help all role players, namely, government, donor organisations and the community, to improve the total impact of the programme on their livelihoods. If the study is not conducted, this can be a missed opportunity for both the community and government to fully comprehend the magnitude of the contribution of PEPs (if there are any) to service delivery and the livelihoods of programme participants and the community.

1.7 Study Demarcation

The EPWP, as a nationwide government programme, was implemented across the country in all nine provinces. However, for this study's objectives, two key programmes were identified within the Infrastructure Sector of the EPWP:

A. Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme

According to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport (KZN DoT, 2008:22), *zibambele* is a Zulu word meaning “doing it for ourselves”. It is a labour-intensive programme for rural road routine maintenance initiated in 1999 by the KZN DoT, with the target to create 40 000 employment opportunities “over a 10-year period”. The programme targets unemployed households in rural communities. The recruitment of the participants is community-driven, and members of the community suggest the most destitute households where there is nobody working to participate in the programme. Priority is given to female-headed households.

This programme is similar to the Kenyan Lengthsman Model (Ngubane, 2011). The programme appoints a household rather than an individual to perform the general rural road maintenance, which includes patching potholes, grass cutting, and clearing drainage along a 1km to 1.5km stretch of the road next to where that household is located. The DoT is the programme coordinator and funder. It allocates hand tools and equipment (such as wheelbarrows, spades, rakes, sickles, traffic cones for safety on the road, etc.) to be used by these household contractors. They are also allowed to use these tools for private purposes, such as in family agricultural activities or other private economic activities. Their contracts are renewed on an annual basis, depending on whether that household is still regarded as destitute through community structures.

The Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme has three main key objectives:

- 1) To offer continuous and predictable employment opportunities to impoverished communities and families with the aim of ending and reversing the poverty cycle in rural communities.
- 2) To introduce cost-saving, community-driven and labour-based approaches in the upkeep of rural road networks in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province. This initiative has two benefits: fulfilling the Department's mandate to construct and maintain its road networks, and the saving of costs that it would have incurred using the conventional methods of road maintenance.
- 3) The last objective of Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme is to uplift and develop rural women through training all its participants in technical road maintenance skills as well as life skills.

B. Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme

This project is implemented by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) started in 2009, in partnership with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Engineering Division of the Department of Defence (DoD), National Department of Transport (DoT), and National DCoG working with the Premiers' offices, provincial departments of roads and transport, and local municipalities. The objective of the programme is to construct low-cost bailey bridges which improve safety and easy access by rural

communities to government key service delivery points, such as police stations, health facilities, schools, social services and general community amenities.

During the handing-over of one of the bridges on 7 February 2020 in Nkobonga, Eastern Cape, Ms Patricia de Lille, the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, said:

“Today we are building bridges to bring inclusion, break divides and improve access to schools, clinics and economic opportunities for the people in our rural communities. However, we cannot forget that sadly, before these bridges were constructed, many lives were lost, especially children who have drowned trying to cross rivers and indeed those wounds remain for the families who have lost loved ones”. Polity (2020:3).

Fourie (2006) notes that the apartheid system created homelands characterised by a lack of service delivery and the absence of key community infrastructure, such as police stations, health facilities, schools, social services, and many other amenities. During rainy periods, some facilities are not reachable due to impassable river crossings. School-going children are unable to cross the rivers after the rain safely, and many drownings have been reported. Some of these rivers are also crocodile-infested (KZN DoT, 2018).

These barriers created by the apartheid system blocked linkages between communities and exacerbated under-development. Communities living across the river, even if less than 2km from healthcare facilities, police stations or post offices where they collect their old age or child support grants, have to spend extra money just to reach those facilities because they cannot cross the river safely. Unemployed young people who want to go to police stations to certify their documents and take them to the post office, also experience the same challenge of spending extra money they don't have just to reach those amenities because the river is full and there are no proper bridges for them to cross safely.

The above programmes have been intensely executed mainly in three provinces: KZN, the Eastern Cape, and the Free State. The study targeted projects and work opportunities created during 2019/20 and those that may have overlapped or continued in the 2020/21 financial year (i.e. multi-year projects), with the aid of the EPWP spatial distribution map (Appendix 1: Fig. 13 and Fig. 14), outlines project concentration as well as work opportunities reported in each province. In KZN, the following district municipalities were selected: Harry Gwala, Ugu, iLembe, and King Cetshwayo (previously referred to as uThungulu). These districts were chosen because of the spatial distribution of EPWP projects and the number of work opportunities reported under each district. In the Eastern Cape, the following districts were selected: Amathole, OR Tambo, and Chris Hani District Municipalities. The selection also took into account where the bridges and infrastructure were built. In the Free State Province, Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality was selected because this is where the Monatsa EPWP Project was implemented.

1.8 Research Methodology and Study Design

1.8.1 Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to an approach or the method that one can employ in conducting any investigation. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2004), there are various types of research methods. Study objectives are critical in determining the method and approach to be used. These methods are: qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods. For the purpose of this study, the

most appropriate method adopted was a qualitative research method in order for this study to be able to provide a holistic insight into this phenomenon.

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016:52) define the qualitative research method as being “concerned with the interpretation and understanding of any phenomenon or subject being studied”. Adam (2013) further states that qualitative research is informed by its objectives and how it treats matters of social life. It primarily uses words as opposed to numbers as a method of data analysis. The advantage cited for the qualitative research method is its ability to offer an explanation, even in complex written descriptions, about the experience people have in relation to the research topic. It is able to give adequate information from the human perspective of the matter being investigated, such as people’s emotions, behaviour or relationships, rather than treating information or people as simple subjects.

This means that qualitative research methods are concerned with humanism. In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2008:65) argue that “qualitative research methods include these well-known qualitative designs: 1) grounded theory; 2) narrative; 3) ethnography; 4) phenomenology; 5) qualitative case studies; and 6) historical research”.

1.8.2 Study Design: Data Collection and Analysis Process

According to Kothari (2004:45) research design is “the theoretical foundation on which a study is premised”. It establishes the framework, guidelines and process for data collection. It also indicates the process followed to measure and assess the study evidence, in line with the objectives of the research and in a manner that will assist in realising the intended aim of the research. Mafuwane, (2011) citing Leedy (1997) interpolates that research design is regarded as a strategy used by a researcher to give a complete plan and approach to collect data. Similarly, in the definition by MacMillan and Schumacher (2001), it becomes clear that research design is viewed regarded as a roadmap developed by the investigator to assist in identifying the research subjects, sites for the research, and the approach to collect data to enable the researcher to address the research objectives and questions. Therefore, research design one could regard as an appropriate framework for collecting data, analysis, interpretation, and generating evidence.

In research domains, a variety of research design methodologies are employed, and each is related to the nature or goal of the investigation. They each have their own benefits and drawbacks. Kothari (2004) provided a concise description of these many research designs by classifying them according to the various studies and case objectives for research design, including: 1) exploratory; 2) hypothesis-testing; and 3) descriptive and diagnostic research studies.

This study adopted a descriptive and diagnostic research design in line with its objectives as the as the most suitable design, specifically using a case study approach. Nachmias and Nachmias (2004) define case studies as concerned with observing an individual or collective individuals at a particular given point, especially after something has happened that has supposedly created a change in their life or environment. Due to the number of participants and the elected methodology for this research, an in-depth semi-structured interviews were administered for data collection. As asserted by Struwig and Stead (2013:98), during such interviews, “a set of predetermined questions were asked to all research participants following a methodical and consistent approach”. Furthermore, Shava (2017:45), citing Maree et al., (2009:87) notes that “semi-structured interviews need the research subjects to respond to a list of predetermined questions” and permit a chance for follow-up questions where clarity is needed.

This study adopted a qualitative research method because, as noted by Leedy and Ormrod (2010:94), this method is critical as it allows participants to provide responses even to challenging situations, wherefore it is anchored in the epistemology paradigm. After collecting the data, the researcher then analysed it using a template approach method. This means that the answers were systematically coded and classified according to emerging themes and then later categorised, arranged, assessed, matched and reviewed. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) emphasised that to assign connotations to qualitative data, one needs to follow four key categories, namely, whether the data is evaluative, diagnostic, contextual, and strategic. These four key categories were utilised during the analysis of the data for this study since all the data was labelled, organised and interpreted to come to an appropriate conclusion.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

In defining theory, Somekh and Lewin (2011) refer to it as a combination of concepts that are incorporated around a principal theme to form a theoretical framework, which in turn is used to provide an explanation and reasons for a particular phenomenon, namely, how it came about, why it came about, etc. All the research stages are affected by theory and, at the same time, all the stages of the research also affect the theory, according to Nachmias and Nachmias (2004). This means that theories aid in describing and forecasting phenomena of particular interest to the researcher.

In line with the main aim of this study, to explore the contribution of PEPs to service delivery and sustainable livelihoods in rural communities, Program Theory Evaluation (PTE) was selected to frame this study as its theoretical framework because conceptually, PEPs in South Africa have clear pre-determined goals and objectives, i.e. “to provide work opportunities and income support to participants thereby contributing to development” (EPWP, 2017a:17). As Donaldson (2003:114) claims, PTE is regarded as “a common understanding of how a program is presumed to solve the social problem(s)”. It systematically and sequentially uses a clearly defined approach in its process, i.e. inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes in programme evaluation to see whether or not the programme achieved its objectives.

1.10 Key concepts and terms defined

To better understand this study, it is important for one first to grasp the key concepts used. They are also discussed and unpacked in detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis. These concepts are:

- **Service Delivery**

According to the Reconstruction and Development White Paper of 1994, service delivery is described as a form of meeting the primary needs of the community (Government of South Africa, 1994). Primary needs of communities include “access to basic health services, education, water and sanitation, and protection”. These are what Crous (2017) refers to as the primary task of any government.

- **Rural Areas**

In the context of South Africa, rural areas according to Ferguson (2013:76), refer to areas with limited or without “access to key infrastructure and ordinary public services”. These include access to adequate and proper health facilities, safe drinking water, educational facilities and sanitation. They are depicted by the inferior quality of services provided, such as insufficient

quantities of water, inferior infrastructure and other essential services. Furthermore, rural areas, according to Jacobs and Makaudze (2012) are characterised by their geographical inaccessibility and long distances between households. The topographical features of rural areas hinder physical and easy access to essential public amenities, such as schools, police stations, healthcare facilities, and places of work.

- **Livelihoods that are sustainable**

Elasha et al. (2005) define “livelihoods” as all forms of actions, privileges and possessions, including assets that people use to make a living. In this taxonomy, assets are not defined by only looking into their natural or biological features, such as water or land. Assets include social components and aspects, such as family, social networks, participation, and human capital, including knowledge and talents. Physical assets also form part of the broader definition of assets, such as infrastructure, schools, bridges, roads etc. Farrington et al. (1999) opines that for a livelihood to be sustainable, it must ensure that people are able to deal with the stresses and shockwaves brought by the environment, as well as the ability to bounce back from them. At the same time, it should be able to maintain or increase the ability to resist those shocks in future, without damaging the natural resources.

- **Public Employment Programmes (PEPs)**

Around the world, many terms exist to describe different kinds of special employment programmes implemented by governments with the primary purpose of creating employment in order to address high levels of unemployment and underemployment in society. Historically, such programmes were often called public works programmes (PWP) – and many still are. The context of such programmes was limited to the realms of infrastructure development. Hence, the concept of ‘works’ is often referred to as infrastructural outputs. Over time, however, the nature of the work undertaken in such programmes has significantly diversified. In particular, the introduction of various forms of social and other service work undertaken is now part of the spectrum of work in such programmes. According to Lal et al. (2010), this led to the ILO to use the term “public employment programmes (PEPs)” as the generic term instead of “public works programmes”. This is to reflect that the work outputs through such programmes have now begun to include services. In South Africa, similar to global PEPs, the government implements the EPWP, “a nationwide government-led initiative with the objective of providing work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through labour intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development” (EPWP, 2017a).

1.11 Limitations of the Study

This research focused on three provinces where the EPWP with these target projects (Zibambele Road Maintenance and Rural Bridges) were largely implemented, which are the Eastern Cape, KZN and Free State Provinces. The primary data was gathered from these geographic areas despite the fact that the EPWP is implemented across all nine provinces of the country. This decision was taken as a result of time and resource constraints encountered by the researcher. Consequently, the results do not characterise the collective opinions of all role players taking part in the Programme in the whole of South Africa. Somekh and Lewin (2011) pointed out that researchers working in areas where there is systemic disadvantage have a responsibility to adopt a standpoint that will counter the bias and limitations presented by those circumstances. In this regard, the sampling strategy also assisted in avoiding potential bias that might have arisen as a result of this limitation.

1.12 Overview and Outline of Chapters

This thesis comprises seven chapters organised in the following sequence:

- Chapter 1: Study Background and Scope**
This is the preambular chapter, outlining the background of the research, and the role of PEPs in addressing the challenges of joblessness and poverty. This chapter also provides a brief historical context of the EPWP in South Africa and its objectives. Furthermore, this chapter discussed these important topics for the study: they include, study problem statement; the questions that this research seeks to answer; study objectives and its significance; as well as methodology employed by the study, followed by confines and parameters of the study.
- Chapter 2: Public Employment Programmes Review**
Chapter 2 gives a thorough review of the origins of PEPs, and a global perspective looking at countries in Latin America, comprised of Ecuador, Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru and Brazil. A further assessment of PEP implementation by Asian countries, with the following countries selected: Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh and India, is included. Finally, the focus turned to the African continent, where an assessment of PEP implementation was also carried out in the following countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda and South Africa.
- Chapter 3: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**
This chapter gives the detailed review of the literature conducted for the study on areas being widely researched about PEPs, including monetary gains provided by the programme to beneficiaries as well as infrastructure provided. This chapter also outlines the gaps in the assessment of PEPs, particularly in the provision of service to communities. The last section of this chapter looks at adopted theoretical framework for this study.
- Chapter 4: Sustainable Livelihoods, Public Service Delivery and Rurality in South Africa**
Chapter 4 explores the concepts used in this study, which includes sustainable livelihoods and its origins, and further looks at public service delivery, guiding policies, frameworks and prescripts. Furthermore, the chapter provides a conceptual definition of rurality in South Africa.
- Chapter 5: Research Methodology**
Chapter 5 discusses the methodology selected for this study. The discussion includes reviewing different study designs and the most appropriate design for this research. Furthermore, this chapter explores various research paradigms, the site where this study was conducted, the sampling strategy, and the approach for the collection and analysis of data.
- Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results**
Chapter 6 then presents and discusses the data collected from the study, the research findings, as well as an analysis thereof.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the last chapter of the study which concludes the research, highlighting the study findings and provides recommendations.

1.13 Conclusion

At the beginning, the chapter started by providing the background and the role of PEPs as a social protection tool used during challenges of persistent unemployment and dire poverty. A brief history of the EPWP, the objectives of the Programme and its origins were provided, as part of building a broader foundation for the study. This chapter discussed the research problem statement and gaps identified in the measurement of EPWP's contribution to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa.

Furthermore, it outlined the study questions and objectives, including the significance and rationale for the study. The study demarcation and detailed overview of the programmes to be evaluated in this study were discussed. Finally, the research methodology adopted by this study, key concepts, including the study theoretical framework were outlined. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 2) provides a detailed review of PEPs in relation to job creation, poverty alleviation, and service delivery with the focus on selected countries from Latin America, Asia and Africa.

CHAPTER 2

Public Employment Programmes: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This study aimed to examine and evaluate the contributions of public employment programmes (PEPs) to service delivery and to the livelihoods of rural communities in South Africa. Furthermore, the study assessed factors affecting the implementation of PEPs in rural communities and how to expand these programmes to have greater impact on the livelihoods of programme participants and their communities. This chapter comprised of three key sections. Section one looks at the implementation of PEPs in Latin America, with the focus on the following countries: Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico and Ecuador. The second section discusses the implementation and impact of PEPs in Asia (South Asia specifically), with examples from the following countries: Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia and India. Lastly, the third section analyses the implementation of PEPs by African countries, focusing on the following countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda and South Africa, where this study is conducted.

2.1 Rationale for the Selected Countries

The selected countries possess certain features and characteristics similar to those of South Africa. This will assist in ensuring that any comparisons drawn between the countries have some basis, as opposed to what some call “comparing bananas with oranges”. The first point of departure is that all these countries in the Latin American Region, according to the World Population Review (WPR, 2020), are part of developing nations, also sometimes collectively referred to as the Global South. This is the primary broad feature for all the selected countries. Secondly, on specific characteristics, considering Brazil in relation to South Africa, Brazil is part of BRICS, an acronym that refers to five key emerging economies comprised of: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Furthermore, in the Latin American Region, Brazil has the largest economy (World Bank, 2015), similar to South Africa. When one looks at the African continent, “South Africa has the second-largest economy in Africa, after Nigeria, World Economic Forum (2019:33). All the selected countries in the Latin American Region, except Costa Rica, “Are in the top-ten performing economies in the region”, (WPR, 2020:65). This provides a much closer comparison to South Africa.

Regarding the Asian countries (more specifically, South Asia), a similar approach was used. For example, India is part of the BRICS nations, it has the largest economy in the South Asian region, with the other three countries (Nepal, Bangladesh and Indonesia) forming part of the top-five performing economies in the region. Although Indonesia is in South-East Asia, according to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it is second after India, according to the World Bank (2019). This also makes the comparison with South Africa useful.

The third region being looked at is Africa and its selected countries. In Africa, the economic performance in terms of GDP or BRICS membership was not considered. Instead, the socio-political history of these countries was the basis for identifying similarities or the socio-political events that took place in each country’s history and how they overcame those challenges. Furthermore, how these African nations used PEPs to address poverty and unemployment challenges emanating from their

historical background was considered. For example, South Africa, after the National Party (NP) gained office in 1948, extended the racial segregation laws that existed before and gave them the name ‘apartheid’. Under the apartheid laws, the majority of the population (Blacks, Coloureds and Indians) in South Africa were forced to stay in separate areas and not mix with the white population. The ANC and many other liberation movements, such as the Pan African Movement (PAC) and South African Communist Party (SACP) in the country opposed and fought the system, which resulted in many people dying from 1948 up to 1994, when the apartheid regime was defeated and negotiations ensued between the liberation movements, led by the ANC and the NP-led government. It is estimated that, according to Coleman (1998:13), “more than 21 000 people died in South Africa due to political violence”, and the country experienced more than 46 massacres, which left a trail of dead people along the line. Many of these massacres involved state police and military. The country has still not recovered from the impact of apartheid. When it comes to income distribution inequality, South Africa is among the most unjust nations in the world and the most difference falls along racial lines. The majority (Blacks) still face the brunt of apartheid, with significant rates of joblessness and poverty.

When one compares this with the situation in Rwanda, where in 1994, the country experienced one of the worst atrocities in its history, the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis. More than 800 000 Tutsis were killed in this genocide. Reports indicate that the killings only took 100 days. This civil war left the country torn apart. After the civil war, the country embarked on national reconciliation, nation-building and post-war rehabilitation. While on the other hand, Somalia and Ethiopia are neighbouring countries in the eastern part of the African Continent. In 2011, Somalia experienced widespread famine as a result of drought and rapid food price increases. This prompted the United Nations (UN) to declare some parts of the country in a famine crisis. According to Austen (2015), more than 3.1 million people were affected, of whom 2.8 million were living in South Central Somalia. This situation was exacerbated by an ongoing civil war, and inaccessibility of humanitarian support due to the “politicisation of aid by *Al Shabaab*” (ibid). In the same breath, Ethiopia has experienced widespread famines over the decades, but between 1983 and 1985, the country went through what was regarded as the “worst famine to hit the country in a century” that saw more than 1.2 million dead, while more than 400 000 refugees were recorded to have left the country and “more than 2.5 million people were internally displaced and left more than 200 000 as orphans” (Moris, 2014:8). These African countries share similar attributes to South Africa in terms of socio-political history (political violence and poverty, even though the scale may differ).

In summary, the approach adopted in selecting the countries is that South Africa was used as a benchmark, i.e. looking at the features of South Africa against some of its peers in Latin America, South Asia as well as the African continent. The measure used in selecting countries is their economic performance and standing in the region as well as the socio-political history of the countries (this was used mostly as a factor in countries on the African continent). There are many countries with similar features and characteristics to South Africa that could still be added to the list. However, in order to reduce duplication and over-emphasising the points, the focus was only placed on the above-discussed countries.

2.2 Public Employment Programmes: A Global Perspective

2.2.1 Public Employment Programmes in Latin America

According to Puyana (2011), for Latin American countries, poverty has turned out to be a highly sensitive matter in the political arena. Despite more than 20 years of various economic and structural reforms, including stabilising the economy and the liberation of trade, economic growth has not been as vigorous as anticipated. Unemployment, inequality and poverty have shown no sign of improvement over the period from 1970 to 2009, which saw various economic and structural reforms, including times of accelerated growth. Despite these reforms and interventions, the face of unemployment, poverty or inequality in these countries did not change drastically.

Nations in the Latin American region have used PWP as a vehicle to address various social, economic and environmental challenges, while creating employment at the same time. The sections below will assess and review various PEPs in these countries: Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico and Ecuador.

2.2.1.1 Brazil: *Bolsa Verde* Programme

To contribute to addressing environmental degradation and promote environmental protection and conservation, the Brazilian government in 2011, as part of social protection, introduced the *Bolsa Verde* Programme. The Programme had two basic objectives: 1) to encourage the conservation of the environment in the country; and 2) to transfer income in order to advance the lives of households and communities living in extreme poverty in Brazil. This Programme formed part of the broader government plan, Brazil without Extreme Poverty Plan (PBSP). This government plan was introduced in 2011 to eliminate dire poverty in the country by using a social protection network informed by chains of public policies designed to attack various dimensions of poverty. According to World without Poverty (WWP, 2017:43), this plan comprised of more than 120 programmes and initiatives, consolidated into three main pillars focusing on “income security, access to public services and productive inclusion”.

A. Implementation Model and Nature of the Work for *Bolsa Verde*

The *Bolsa Verde* Programme aimed to curtail environmental degradation and depletion of forests in the country. Through the appointment of low-income families living nearby forests to manage them, which included maintaining forest cover, creating firebreaks to prevent forest fires, and removal of alien invasive species in the forests. The Programme targeted more than 51 000 impoverished Brazilian households and families with cash payments in return for their services in maintaining and keeping forest cover. The *Bolsa Verde* Programme combines the objectives of environmental conservation and social protection.

The recruitment of the participants for the programme follows a systemic process, which includes families regarded as extremely poor and registered in the Unified Registry, which is the main tool used by the state to identify those in the population falling in the category of low earning groups. The register has a vital part that it plays in the working of the country’s social protection system. There is an established programme steering committee that validates all the participants in the Programme.

Figure 2 below outlines the recruitment process to ensure that well-deserving and targeted families receive priority.

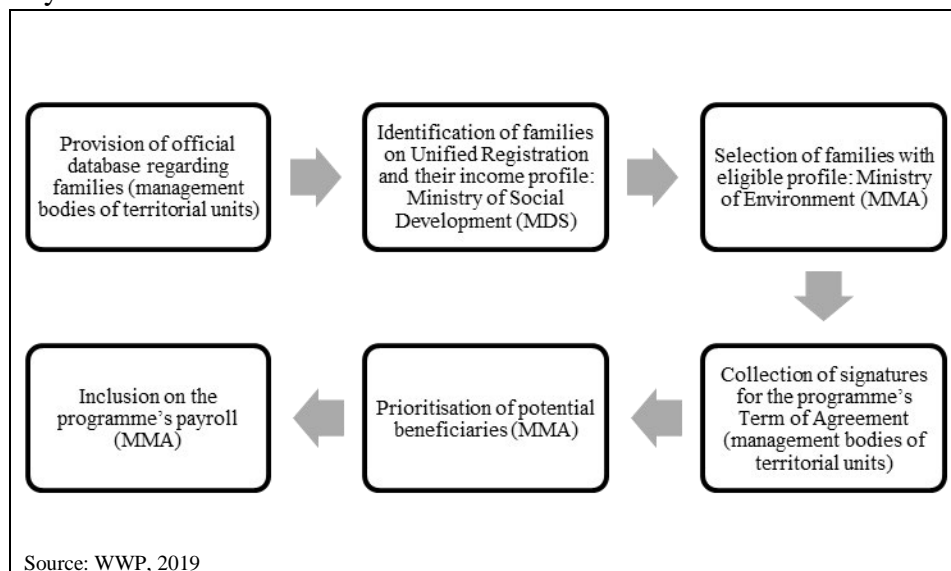


Figure 2: Recruitment and selection of *Bolsa Verde* Programme's target beneficiaries

Addressing the environmental challenges through PWP, the Brazilian government was well aware of the strong relationship and link that exists among poverty, environment and social protections. Schwarzer, Van Panhuys and Diekmann (2016) upholds that for a significant number of poor people in developing countries, their livelihoods are strongly dependent on the biodiversity of the ocean, forest, coast, or land. Therefore, any destruction of these factors has a direct effect on the lives of poor people. When natural disasters occur as a result of climate change, the most affected groups are also the poor people in developing or underdeveloped countries. This group is the most affected by environmental shocks, despite being on the list of contributors to climate change problems, as outlined in an Oxfam (2015) report. Schwarzer et al. (2016) further argue that in numerous nations, indigenous and tribal population groups are the most susceptible to environmental disasters and shocks because their livelihoods strongly hinge on natural resources. By introducing the *Bolsa Verde* Programme, the Brazilian Government fully recognised and appreciated the role that environmental protection has in the lives of the citizens both directly and indirectly.

The programme targeted extremely poor families, and the report by Schwarzer et al. (2016:38) indicates that since the launch of the Programme in 2011, “more than 11.3 million hectares of forest have been maintained”. The Programme surpassed its target of 50 000 jobs by creating employment opportunities for more than 72 000 families by 2014, with the budget in excess of US\$82 million injected into communities.

B. Programme Impact and Achievements: *Bolsa Verde*

Through the *Bolsa Verde* Programme, the government was able to reduce environmental degradation by means of public forests management, by maintaining forest cover, creating firebreaks to prevent forest fires and removal of alien invasive species in the forests by communities and families appointed in the Programme, more than 11.3 million hectares of forest were maintained, which has a positive impact on climate change, but also to families who directly benefited on jobs created through this

programme. Unlike other public works programmes, the *Bolsa Verde* Programme targets families or households recruited through the Unified Registry. Others target unemployed individuals. However, this is not a highly unique approach in the recruitment of participants in PWPs, because in South Africa, there is a similar programme called Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme targeting families or households, as explained in section 1.7 above.

2.2.1.2 Peru: Workfare Programme - *Construyendo Perú*

This Programme was introduced in 2007 to replace *Trabajar Urbano* initiative by the Government of Peru. This programme was introduced to support poverty-stricken and unemployed people in the country, particularly heads of households, in a sustainable way. According to the ILO (2016), for the Programme to reach its goal, short-term employment was provided to participants through public investment projects financed by the state. But to ensure sustainability and future employability after the project ended, participants were also provided with training to improve their skills. It was regarded as a “workfare” programme because it did not look only at one recessionary event, as was the case with its predecessor, *Trabajar Urbano*, which was developed to create temporary employment opportunities and income transfer in the aftermath of the 1998 and 2001 global economic meltdown that shook Peru. *Construyendo Perú* looked beyond the current jobs created by the Programme to include measures to address what will happen after the project participants exit the Programme. The focus was on whether they will be able to find employment and sustain themselves and their families. That is why the training and skills transfer elements were crucial in this Programme. The provision of income support to address the current poverty challenges was coupled with training to address future employability challenges. Furthermore, this Programme was extended to reach rural communities, as opposed to only urban areas, as was the case with *Trabajar Urbano*, its predecessor.

The recruitment and selection of the participants followed a systematic planning process and stages, as was the case for the Brazilian *Bolsa Verde* Programme. In stage one, to ensure that the target participants are reached, priority was given to geographic districts (zones) where the prevalence of poverty and unemployment are high, including development weaknesses in those districts. For example, if a district or zone is classified as poverty-stricken and characterised by under-development in terms of the composite index called *Factor de Asignación Distrital* (FAD) – which tracks the urban population in the region, the human development status, as well as poverty levels – participants in those areas are prioritised (Escudero, 2016).

The second approach or stage is regarded as self-targeting, which means the wage level is fixed below the standard rate of pay to enable individuals to use their economic conditions and vulnerability to choose to join the programme as their only option. In other words, those who are vulnerable and have no other options elect to participate in the programme. Setting a wage lower than the standard or minimum wage also assists in reducing the displacement of workers. For example, a higher wage in a short-term PWP will attract someone who is or has been working in a permanent job to join short-term employment, but in the process, if they lose all the benefits accumulated in the permanent job they abandoned, they will prefer not to change employment. The *Construyendo Perú*, according to Escudero (2016), paid a wage of about US\$11.4, equivalent to 63.6% of the national minimum wage between 2008 and 2010 in the country. This clearly demonstrates that the Programme took into

account two components targeting truly needy and vulnerable participants, and ensuring that no worker leaves their permanent or long-term employment to join this PWP.

The last stage of the Programme is the actual selection of participants from a group of people who had listed their names to take part. To select beneficiaries and ensure fairness in the process, predetermined conditions and criteria are used. For example, applicants are checked in terms of their age, i.e. those 18 years and older. They are checked to see whether they are heads of households and unemployed and also whether they are poor and poverty-stricken, in line with the socio-economic condition assessment conducted by the Programme in different areas and zones using two steps. The first step was to check everyone who applied to be part of the program and registered in the national system targeting poor households called *Sistema de Focalización de Hogares* (SISFOH). All those individuals were kept in the system as possible and eligible beneficiaries. For the rest of the applicants, through socio-economic profiling, their poverty levels were assessed to see if they are eligible to participate using seven factors, including households with insufficient physical features; overcrowded housing or housing with no drain; households with no children going to school; low levels of educational attainment; high levels of economic dependence; and the number of employed individuals in the household.

After the classification and categorisation of all applicants are completed, the programme then conducts a public draw to select the final participants. However, certain priorities were taken into account. The first priority was including unemployed household heads who have children younger than 18 years, followed by young people between the age of 18 and 29 years. The third priority was given to people with disabilities, with 5% of the space reserved for them. This was to ensure that the right and deserving people are prioritised in *Construyendo Perú* Workfare Programme.

A. Nature of Work and Training in the *Construyendo Perú* Workfare Programme

The Programme participants were involved in various short-term public investment projects in their communities. Key among those, according to the ILO (2016), are construction of pedestrian access, construction and maintenance of irrigation canals, development of post-harvest infrastructure, and building of retention walls in areas susceptible to flooding and landslides. The *Construyendo Perú* Workfare Programme focused on the building and maintenance of educational infrastructure as well as healthcare infrastructure. During the project implementation, participants were provided with skills development and training, which was broken into two segments. The first segment covered a more general form of training, focusing on softer issues such as empowerment, social skills, interpersonal skills, and basic skills for implementing and managing a project. This form of training was mandatory for all participants. The second segment of training offered by the Program was meant to capacitate participants with technical skills in line with labour market demands in the region. One of the founding principles of the Programme was to ensure participants become employable after they exit the Programme. Therefore, a targeted skills development approach and responding to labour market demand was important. This training was not mandatory but self-targeting for individuals with a particular level of skills.

B. *Construyendo Perú* Workfare Programme Outcomes and Impact

During the implementation period of the Programme, the ILO (2016) report on the employment effects of PWPs indicates that the *Construyendo Perú* Programme created more than 685 000 short-term jobs, with the duration varying from a few weeks to 120 days (four months) and 39% of participants were trained on general skills, while only 4% received technical training. This report shows a noticeable disparity in the number of participants trained in general skills, despite the fact that general skills training was mandatory. Similarly, when it comes to technical skills, the ILO (2016) report shows that only 27 000 participants received technical training. This is concerning, especially since the Programme emphasised the future employability of participants.

However, the study conducted by Escudero (2016) about the effectiveness of the *Construyendo Perú* Programme found that the primary aim was to create short-term jobs for unemployed members of the community living in poverty in Perú, improve their living standards and employability opportunities in the future after the programme ends, and create or enhance public and community infrastructure. The Programme was able to make a positive impact and improve the prospects of its participants as they were able to get employment in future. Compared to men, women had higher chances of employment, which increased from 4.5% to 7%, as well as those with lower education levels. The Programme was also able to make participants active in the labour market and improve public and community infrastructure.

2.2.1.3 Costa Rica: *Pago por Servicios Ambientales* (PPSA)

Public employment have been implemented as an intervention to address various social, environmental and economic problems, as seen in the case of the Brazilian *Bolsa Verde* programme, and as part of fighting the scourge of intense deforestation in Costa Rica, which threatened to wipe out one of the most important natural resources in the country. It has been upheld by Schwarzer et al. (2016) that forests in Costa Rica covered almost 70% of the country's landscape in 1950; however, by 1987, only 20% of the country's landscape was covered by forests. To address this waiting catastrophe, the government started to build tough policy frameworks on reforestation, management and protection of forests. One of those measures was the introduction of Forestry Law No. 7575, followed by the launch of *Pago por Servicios Ambientales* (PPSA) in 1996, as part of the national Payment for Environmental Services (PES) system, with the focus on conservation services (management and protection of forests in Costa Rica). The actual running of the Programme only commenced in 1997. To implement and fund this legislation, the government committed to using 5% of the fuel levy.

The national Forestry Law provided for the establishment of institutional arrangements and governance structures to manage and distribute the funding. As a result, the National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) was established to kick-start the work of the Programme and distribute funding to relevant parties.

A. Implementation Model and the Nature of Work for *Pago por Servicios Ambientales*

As indicated above, the Programme was funded by government through a fuel levy. Porras, Barton, Chacón-Cascante and Miranda (2013) indicate that landowners, irrespective of their status (i.e. either a legal entity or individual), were rewarded by the Programme with cash payments (as part of contracts) for various environmental services provided in the management and maintenance of forests. The PPSA initially focused on forest guarding, replantation, and sustainable forest management. Forest owners had agreements of between five and 15 years, which may be extended for these services. Their payments were once-off or on an ongoing basis, depending on how the agreement is structured. As time went on, new areas were introduced, for example, agroforestry projects in 2003 to accommodate environmental services rendered by commercial farmers (shade trees or fruit trees) of different sizes, as their work also plays a part in decreasing rural poverty and small-scale farmers benefit from this programme.

Again in 2006, a regeneration project also formed part of the PPSA. The Programme developed criteria for landowners who wish to take part, for example, proof of land ownership, tax compliance documents (local tax), size of the property, map of the area, etc. This ensured that the contracts were awarded to landowners in high-risk areas of deforestation. This is as opposed to the previous approach of a first-come-first-serve basis, where many landowners in low-risk areas and well-off individuals benefited instead.

B. Programme Impact and Achievements: *Pago por Servicios Ambientales*

According to Porras et al. (2013), a noticeable achievement that has made PPSA one of the most well-known and quoted cases in a developing economy is the reversing of the deforestation trajectory. In 2013, reforestation and afforestation showed a firm recovery from 20% in 1987 to 52% in 2013. This is an upward trend towards the original position of 70% of the country's landscape covered by forest during the 1950s. Furthermore, the programme evaluation report by Schwarzer et al. (2016) indicates that between the year when the programme started up to 2012, more than 15 375 contracts were signed with a vast number of role players, including natural persons and legal entities (large and small). There was a deliberate effort by the government to ensure that all sectors of society benefited and participated in this national drive to reforest the country. The results further indicated that more than US\$341.8 million has been spent on this programme since inception until 2012. This is direct funding that went to PPSA participants for their work in tree plantation and forest management.

2.2.1.4 Mexico: *Pago por Servicios Ambientales Hidrológicos* (PSAH)

For decades now, PWPs remain a general and often-used policy instrument in emerging economies to support vulnerable members of society by providing them with income support during tough economic times and to alleviate poverty. They have proved to be a form of insurance to protect them against economic shocks (Escudero, 2018). However, this is not the same when compared to developed countries, where PWPs are mainly used during a specific economic crisis, and once that has ended, the programmes also end. In emerging and underdeveloped countries, PWPs are mostly seen as a “way of life” due to various challenges people experience in terms of poverty,

unemployment and inequality. These programmes are no longer a short-term measure, but serve as a safety net for as long as people need them.

Escudero (2018) asserts that the magnitude of the implementation of these programmes in Latin America has not reached that of their counterparts in Africa and Asia. However, there has been a noticeable increase in these programmes and budget allocations towards them in the last two decades in Latin America. The Mexican government, being motivated by the implementation of the PPSA by the Costa Rican government, launched its version in 2003 called *Pago por Servicios Ambientales Hidrológicos* (PSAH) as a PES programme. This Programme has undergone various changes and amendments since it was introduced. However, the model and its operations are still similar to that of the Costa Rican PPSA. The objectives of the Programme are to support and protect biodiversity and conservation. As the years went on, some new projects were added and integrated into the PSAH to form a more comprehensive and combined means to protect and manage biodiversity in the country for environmental sustainability. Those programmes include tourism, reforestation, commercial plantation, etc.

A. Programme Implementation and the Nature of Work: *Pago por Servicios Ambientales Hidrológicos*

Similar to the PPSA Programme of Costa Rica, in the PSAH Programme, landowners (indigenous communities and commons) entered into a contract with the government to protect and conserve the original plantation and trees on their land. In return, the government pays the landowners cash for the work they have done. The Programme is mainly funded by the Mexican government through a federal water-usage fee. However, additional funding is received from other sources, such as donations from private contributors and grants and loans from other institutions. In 2016, the World Bank provided a loan to PSAH. The contracts are valid for five years; however, the landowner may reapply at the end if they want to continue participating in the Programme. The Programme only makes payments once a year (at the end) to all the participants, provided they have not changed the use of the land. The PSAH created many long-lasting job opportunities for communities, while protecting and preserving the environment.

The PSAH is run and managed by the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) and the responsibilities of this Commission include the management of the programme systems, performance monitoring and evaluation, and raising and sourcing funding. The Commission is also responsible for providing technical advice to applicants. The work performed by the landowners, as part of their contract with government, includes:

- Maintenance of forest cover;
- Putting fire control mechanisms and plans in place;
- Deterring illegal logging and hunting; and
- Erecting signage to increase awareness among communities about the protection of forests and activities permitted in the area.

All contracted landowners had to develop a comprehensive plan to manage the forest, whereby they will be able to identify the risks and preventative measures to be put in place to mitigate those risks identified.

Since the PSAH mirrored the Costa Rican Programme, the recruitment and selection of landowners to participate in the programmes were similar. The Mexican recruitment and selection criteria also went through some changes and adjustments over time since the programme was first introduced. For example, during the start of the programme, the criteria only focused on the size of the forest. As such, the criteria considered environmental aspects, and as such, the participants' appointment to the programme followed the first-come-first-serve principle. However, as the programme evolved and grew, new criteria were introduced to include social targeting and administration. This was to ensure that the programme addressed the environmental challenge and that poor and poverty-stricken communities also benefitted through job creation and income support, Schwarzer et al. (2016) affirms.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2013a) outlines the key targeting criteria used by the PSAH even today as, among others:

- 1) The location and the areas where the project lies to assist in evaluating whether there is a high or low risk of deforestation.
- 2) Socio-economic conditions of the family or community. An assessment is made of poverty levels in the area or household, the percentage of indigenous people, and the participation of women in the project.
- 3) Environmental criteria, including the coverage of trees, level of biodiversity, biomass density, disaster propensity, availability of water, and level of land degradation in the area.
- 4) Criteria on relevant and appropriate land maintenance or development efforts, for example, available community land use plans or local surveillance systems.

B. Programme Impact and Achievements: *Pago por Servicios Ambientales Hidrológicos*

A report from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (Davis, Nogueron and Javelle, 2012) indicates that by 2012, “more than 5 400 commons, communities and small landowners took part in the Programme”. This arguably surpassed the Costa Rican PPSA by covering more than 2.2 million hectares of forest. In 2013, the programme paid between US\$32 and US\$93 per hectare per year. The amounts are based on the risk associated with the area. For example, cloud forests are regarded as high risk in terms of deforestation and, therefore, the fee is much higher compared to low-risk areas. According to Schwarzer et al. (2016), the PSAH paid US\$429 million by 2012 to its participants. This money differed from year to year; for example, the funding was at US\$14.4 million in 2003 and US\$83.6 million in 2010.

2.2.1.5 Ecuador: *Socio Bosque* Programme

The Ecuador government, as part of the country's Constitution and National Development Plan (*Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir*) acknowledges the vital role played by the ecosystem and how it supports and contributes to human welfare. In recognising this fact, according to the ILO (2016), some imperatives outlined in the National Development Plan include a reduction in deforestation and

enhancing the standard of living and the conditions of the people of Ecuador, creating employment, reducing poverty, and reducing degradation of natural resources. Furthermore, the report by Mongabay (2014:53) indicated that “Almost 200 000 hectares of forest were lost every year since 2005 to 2010 in the country”, putting Ecuador on the highest pedestal when it comes to deforestation in Latin America. To address this challenge and respond to the constitutional objectives as well as the national development plan, the Ecuadorian Ministry for Environment initiated a programme called *Socio Bosque* (SBP) in 2008, taking into account the lessons learnt from Costa Rica and Mexico on their PES schemes. The target of the SBP was to recover 1.23 million hectares of forests by December 2013 and eventually four million hectares of forest in the country, equating to 66% of the total non-protected forests in the country.

A. Programme Implementation and the Nature of Work: *Socio Bosque* Programme

The implementation approach of the SBP and methodology are similar to those of the Mexican and Costa Rican PES programmes, where private landowners, communities and communal landowners receive payment from the government for conserving and protecting native forests. Over time, certain projects and areas were included in the overall SBP. For example, Schwarzer et al. (2016) indicated that from 2013 onwards, conserving and restoring active and passive forests was also rewarded through the Programme.

The work of the participants had to ensure non-destructive use of the forests; this included survival hunting, collection of non-timber products, and productive events on non-forested land. This was to warrant the protection of the forests, natural plantation, unused land, and all associated ecological assets, including those with both economic and cultural value.

The SBP’s targeting approach and selection criteria for participants are similar to the ones for the Mexican and Costa Rican programmes. In the SBP, the targeting criteria cover a combination of poverty levels in the community and environmental needs. A ranking system is used to choose participants, including:

- The level of risk for deforestation in the area.
- How critical the natural forests are for carbon storage.
- How important the forest is for natural habitat and biodiversity.
- The role of the forest in the provision of water service.
- The level of poverty in the specific region based on a basic needs index measuring the status of these needs that are unsatisfied in the region.

B. Programme Impact and Achievements: *Socio Bosque* Programme

According to Schwarzer et al. (2016), by December 2013, a total of 1.23 million hectares of forest was recovered, and more than 161 755 participants registered were and working on the Programme. 7% of those participants were communities, while 97% were individuals. The performance of these different groups is as follows: communities contributed 88% of the total hectares covered, while individual members contributed 12% to the total hectares covered.

2.2.2 Public Employment Programmes in Asia

Asian countries have had their fair share and a long history of PWPs as means to fight against chronic poverty and unemployment. These programmes continue to provide short-term job intervention in order to enhance the level of income for poor communities, while providing assets and services to communities by way of delivering of new community infrastructure and refurbishment of current ones (Del Ninno, Subbarao and Milazzo, 2009:2). This section will focus on PEPs implemented by four Asian countries, i.e., the Indonesian *Padat Karya* Programme, the social protection and public works programmes in Nepal, Food for Work in Bangladesh, and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme in India.

2.2.2.1 Indonesia: *Padat Karya* Programme (1998-2001)

Between 1998-1998, the Indonesia Government introduced the *Padat Karya* (PK) Programme as part of a reaction to the extensive but temporary job losses and destitution of Indonesians emanating from the economic crisis the country experienced. PK was a revival of the earlier labour-intensive employment creation programme that was implemented during the 1970s and 1980s. The earlier programme was also implemented under the same name, *Padat Karya*. The focus was mostly on infrastructure projects in rural parts of Indonesia. These projects include village roads, schools, and irrigation channels.

The PK Programme offered a one-time period of short-term employment to anyone prepared to work under PWP circumstances, and it was quickly adopted on a somewhat broad scale. Using the employment requirement as a rudimentary targeting method, a one-time financial payment was made to individuals who were in need. According to Devereux and Solomon (2006), the Programme provided employment opportunities to local unemployed or under-employed people. It grew after the re-launch in 1998-1999 to include 13 sub-programmes, reaching more than 300 districts in Indonesia. Eight executing agencies were involved in Programme implementation. However, it is a known fact that PEPs alone are unable to address an unemployment crisis. This was also proven in the PK in Indonesia, where the economic crisis left more than nine million people unemployed. The PK Programme, however, only reached about two million people.

After the passing of the 2001 economic recession, the PK Programme was halted and substituted with one that provided longer-term, more consistent job opportunities and benefits to the unemployed and poor members of the society to avert the impact of the economic crisis.

2.2.2.2 Nepal: Social Protection and Public Works Programmes

In Nepal, according to Harris, McCord and Sony (2013), to address the challenges of poverty, food insecurity and unemployment, the government has been using social protection instruments over many centuries. For example, the *Dharma Bhakari* is a system used to store and collect grains managed by the community to address the food security problem. During periods of times of food deficiencies, through this system, food was distributed to the society's most disadvantaged individuals. In 1992, the Nepalese government passed the Social Welfare Act for the first time, which provided for livelihoods for vulnerable and weak individuals and community members. Through this

Act, the government aimed to support all those groups in the community who are unable to help or support themselves. Furthermore, the country's Constitution (2007) put an emphasis on job creation and social protection as fundamental rights for all citizens.

There are two broad social protection instruments used in Nepal:

- a) **Transfer-based social security instruments (in cash or in kind)** – This category involves a variety of cash transfer initiatives, a combination of restricted (conditional) and unrestricted cash transfers, and educational contribution transfers (in cash or in kind). Typical examples of these transfers included old age allowances, maternity support for females, education support for females, and financial allowances for disabled people.
- b) **Intervention in the labour market and social protection** – With the level of unemployment in the country, job creation and increased productivity have become a key priority for government intervention. The country's Tenth Plan (2002-2007) emphasised job creation as the primary focus. This was further echoed by the 2003 poverty reduction strategy, which highlighted employment creation, among its four mainstays. As a result, the Labour Employment Policy was introduced in 2005 to eradicate forced labour and stimulate labour demand in the formal and informal markets. Through understanding the dynamics of the labour market to stimulate job creation in the short term, the government implemented an array of PWPs focusing on different areas.

PWPs in Nepal are divided into four types, according to Harris et al. (2013):

Type 1 programmes are consumption-smoothing PWPs. These are programmes that provide one short-term period of employment as social protection or a safety net to the poor and unemployed during times of severe labour market disruption or acute livelihood disruptions.

Type 2 programmes are income insurance PWPs. They provide certain forms or levels of income insurance, where employment is provided to a community on an ongoing or repeat basis, through government projects also regarded as employment guaranteed schemes. Whenever an unemployed person is looking for a job, the state guarantees that job will be provided, failing which a certain amount of money will be paid to that individual. These programmes are also critical during times of severe labour market disruption or acute livelihoods disruptions.

Type 3 programmes are increasing aggregate-employment PWPs, which promote labour-intensive delivery of infrastructure projects and investments. The intention is to generate short-term job opportunities in the delivery of infrastructure projects. Through these programmes, aggregate employment is increased because of the nature and design of the infrastructure projects, as opposed to fewer jobs that would have been created through other methods of construction that use machinery more.

Type 4 are promoting employability PWPs, focusing on developing the capacity of labourers, and improving their skill and quality of work. This intervention assists in unemployment by ensuring that the potential and opportunities are enhanced due to improved skills, or to ensure that individuals are able to create their own employment (self-employed).

However, the most common type of PWPs in the country is type 3, which are aimed at promoting a more labour-based approach in the implementation of infrastructure projects and investments, and to ensure that more people are used on the projects instead of machines, as it is the case in the conventional infrastructure projects. Below are examples of PWPs implemented in Nepal.

A. The *Karnali* Employment Programme

The National Planning Commission (NPC, 2012a), indicates that the *Karnali* Employment Programme (KEP) was started in 2006 by the Government of Nepal, as a part of its initiative to implement income-generating projects and welfare as social protection interventions, after the Maoist conflict that engulfed the country between 1996 and 2006. The Maoist conflict is regarded as the deadliest civil war that the country ever encountered, which left more the 17 000 people dead, according to Goswami (2015). Post the civil war period, the government, as part of rebuilding the country, introduced the KEP. Nirmal, Shrestha, Acharya, and Ansari (2009) argue that in academic discourse, there is a limited appreciation of the role that violent conflicts played and the opportunities that develop later for positive and progressive change in the community in spite of this. In their assessment of the impact of the Maoist conflict, Nirmal et al. (2009) found that despite the conflict, positive contributions in various ways were made to improve pro-poor development activities. However, one may argue that development need not wait for a civil war. Wars generally destroy, among others, the infrastructure, which takes the country backwards.

The KEP targeted poor people and those vulnerable in communities. It was implemented in five marginalised and deprived districts of the country, according to Harris et al. (2013:48). The purpose of the programme was to “Reduce the levels of poverty and inequality prevalent in the country” through job creation in PWPs, under the theme of “*Ek ghar ek rojgar*” [One family- one employment]. The programme aimed to provide “100 days of employment guaranteed for at least one member of the family or household” who is unemployed or has no other form of income. Any person or member of a household with some form of income, either through temporary or short-term employment, was not allowed to participate in the Programme. The KEP is akin to other PWPs that are being executed in the country currently, focusing on both job creation through a chain of infrastructure projects and physical assets development or maintenance, such as roads and irrigation canals. The table below outlines the achievements of the KEP up to 2011 in five districts.

Table 1: KEP achievements up to 2011 in Nepal

District	No. of projects completed	Average no. of days of employment per family	Budget spent (US\$)
Mugu	133	15	425 700
Dolpa	135	12	307 400
Humla	106	11	362 000
Jumla	87	10	821 200
Kalikot	153	13.5	98 300
TOTAL	614	12.2	2 014 600

Source: Adapted from Harris et al. (2013)

This table indicates a total of 614 projects being completed in all districts, with Kalikot District having the highest number of projects (153), followed by Dolpa, Mugu and Humla with 135, 133 and 106

projects, respectively. Jumla district only completed 87 projects, with the highest budget of more than US\$800 000, followed by Mugu, Humla and Dolpa with budgets of US\$425 700, US\$362 000 and US\$307 400, respectively.

B. Rural Community Infrastructure Works

Rural Community Infrastructure Works (RCIW) is the most established initiative in Nepal. It was introduced in 1996 by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and supported by the German development agency GIZ. The objectives of the programme are to reduce hunger and poverty through the provision of food assistance to vulnerable households in return for work performed in the creation of community assets. In order to build assets and develop skills that improve food security and enhance nutrition among the most marginalised groups, the programme combined cash and food transfers with training methods. According to the World Bank (2015:36), annually, “the RCIW provides 50 to 70 days of employment in the creation of public or community infrastructure to about 480 000 individuals in 21 food-insecure districts to build community infrastructure, such as rural roads, irrigation, flood control, and soil conservation structures”.

The assets created through the RCIW improve agricultural productivity and enhance the country’s rural infrastructure, while strengthening resilience to climatic shocks. As the community works in the programme, they earn income in cash or in kind, which assists in meeting their nutrition gaps and improves their livelihoods and economic status. In a one-year implementation cycle, the programme reaches more than 1.6 million people in 21 districts of Nepal. The World Bank (2015:38) revealed that the RCIW achieved satisfactory milestones, particularly when it came to reaching the pressing necessities of extremely “food-insecure households” in the districts where this problem is common. Furthermore, the programme has assisted in resolving the pressing “need for food and cash in isolated and food-insecure districts of Nepal”. There has been the noticeable upwards move observed from the programme towards the development and improvement of agricultural assets. This shift has great improvement in the agricultural production, particularly in distressed districts in terms of food insecurity.

Looking at these two programmes from Nepal (the KEP and RCIW), they are both targeting poverty and unemployment. However, their implementation methodologies and approach are not the same, especially when one looks at participants’ wage the payments. Despite that, assessments reveal high levels of success in their implementation in job creation, asset creation, poverty alleviation, and food security. According to the World Bank (2015:47), “Significant local infrastructure was built through these programmes that aimed to facilitate agricultural-related activities and further flourishing in the communities”. The Report further identified 10 different forms of infrastructure, including “schools, community buildings, irrigation canals, rural roads, and bridges were constructed. These assets met the technical, social, environmental, and health and safety standards stipulated by the government”. These are key objectives of PEPs, including having a long-lasting impact, even after the short-term employment has ended, but communities still benefit from the assets created through such initiatives.

2.2.2.3 Bangladesh: Food for Work

According to Rubaba, Yoonyoung and Ashiq (2019:2), Bangladesh is an economy largely dependent on agriculture, with its labour force accounting for over 40% of employed people. Given the seasonal nature of the agriculture sector, those whose livelihoods depend on face the high risk of a little or absence of income in the event of lean seasons or during extreme weather conditions, as the main features of Bangladesh. The consequences of changes in the climate and associated natural disasters are quite likely to affect the nation. Every year, major climate shocks affect between 30% and 50% of the country, leaving a trail of adverse effect in the lives and livelihoods of the remaining largely rural inhabitants. These conditions pose a high risk of crop failure or complete loss of the season's harvest, thereby creating food shortages and seasonal poverty. This has resulted in many workers finding it extremely difficult to cope during these seasonal slack periods. Until recent years, Bangladesh has experienced seasonal famine, which are referred to as "*monga*", as a result of adverse weather conditions. Although this devastation affected the whole country, but the region that borne the greatest brunt was the northern because the majority of the country's agricultural supplies comes from this region.

As a way of addressing rural poverty, the government introduced the Food for Work (FFW) programme, and it has been running since 1975 in Bangladesh, according to Del Ninno et al. (2009:2). However, it is worth noting that the FFW is not the only PWP implemented in Bangladesh. There are various types implemented in the country as part of the social safety net. They include:

- **Test Relief (TR):** The TR and FFW to a large extent are similar; however, their main difference is the type of projects implemented under each programme. For example, FFW focuses on developing and improving rural roads and infrastructure, while TR focuses on the maintenance and improvement of local centres for education and religious, such as local schools, *madrasas*, centres for orphans, mosques and temples, amongst the prioritised areas.
- **100-Day Employment Generation Program (EGP):** This programme was introduced in 2008 as part of a PWP in response to the 2008 financial crisis, which saw the decline in the food and fuel stocks, increase in the prices of food and fuel. Later the programme was renamed the "Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP)", with its aim and objectives resembled those of the FFW and TR. The differences are that participants are paid in cash and their money is directly transferred to their accounts, and the EGP employs more effective targeting techniques and female quotas.

However, the FFW will be the primary focus of this investigation, as it plays a vital part to eradicate poverty in rural areas. The programme plays a critical role in the reduction of poverty in rural areas, largely using employment creation to empower the poor and unemployed. The main objectives of the programme are to:

- Create seasonal jobs for disadvantaged people in rural communities.
- Assist in building, repairing or improving rural infrastructure (including rural roads, riverbanks, and irrigation networks) to increase the productiveness of agriculture; decrease structural damage to infrastructure; and prevent fatalities brought on by natural disasters.

- Uphold a balance in the supply of food.
- Reduce poverty in rural communities, create job opportunities, and provide income to the rural poor during lean periods when the rate of unemployment increases in rural areas.
- Ensure the food security of those who are food insecure, landless or unemployed.

The programme creates food-wage employment during the low season. All workers in the programme are paid in kind (that is, through food grain, for example, wheat, rice, maize etc.) instead of cash. This method of payment is understood to stabilise the price of grain on the market, as well as promoting food consumption and improving the nutrition of participating households. Rubaba et al. (2019:2) indicated that during 1978 and 1979, FFW created employment opportunities amounting to 60 million workdays, and more than 0.23 million tons of wheat were produced. Furthermore, in the 1970s, the programme received an allocation of between 4% and 5% of the annual national budget. This grew by 2019 to “2.7% of the safety net budget and 0.07% of the GDP”.

A. Scope and Work Undertaken in FFW

As indicated above, such PWPs in Bangladesh differ mainly in their implementation and scope. The FFW focuses on:

- Excavation and re-excavation of ponds and canals.
- Road building and maintenance, including paved roads.
- Low-height concrete walls along the road sides to help reduce run-off-related soil erosion. The sale of up to 60% of the designated food grains can be used to fund these initiatives.
- Improving community preparation for disasters by:
 - Building or reconstructing embankments; and
 - Building drains to reduce waterlogging and for irrigation.
- During the off-season, build and maintain infrastructure that supports agriculture.
- Installing solar panels.
- Installing biogas plants in designated dormitories and centres for orphans.

B. Programme Impact and Achievements: FFW

The FFW programme is effective in its support for the most poor and vulnerable people in Bangladesh, especially those affected by seasonal disasters. The programme creates work opportunities during the construction and maintenance of community infrastructure. Beneficiaries receive food as payment, and this contributes to improving food security, as their gardens and food stocks may have been damaged by rains and other natural disasters. This model has proved to be very effective, as some other developing countries in Asia and Africa have adopted a similar programme.

Through the FFW programme, it has been reported that more than 3 000 learning centres were completed between 2011 and 2015 in the following cities: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal. In the 2009-2010 financial year, through this programme, 465 bridges and culverts of up to 12m were constructed at an estimated cost of 900 million Bangladeshi Taka (equivalent to US\$105 949). During the same period, a total of 73 326 children aged 10-14 years were fed through the programme, and the majority (60%) were girls. A study by the World Health Organization (WHO,

2010) revealed significant nutritional enhancements in the children under five years and women. The observed improvement was also noted in women who took part in the physically demanding FFW programme.

2.2.2.4 India: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme

According to the *Statistics Times* (2019:32), India has the “second-largest population after China situated in the southern region of Asia”. Its population is estimated at 1.37 billion, with the majority more than 70% residing in rural areas and surviving through the means of agricultural activities. In the mid-1990s, according to Talbot, Langa and Ortiz (2019:25), the country experienced the worst drought, which adversely affected its agricultural productivity and output in rural areas. That left more than “38% of the rural population living in poverty”. As a result, unemployment and rural-urban migration increased due to less economic activity in rural areas. This phenomenon led to overcrowding in cities and the depletion of city resources.

In 2005, the national Government of India, through its Parliament, passed the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA) and in October 2009, it was thereafter retitled the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This was in response to the challenges of poverty and unemployment, particularly in rural communities. Das (2013:1) refers to this action as the boldest and most pragmatic move by the government in “addressing the challenge of rural poverty and unemployment in the country”. The Programme stemmed from the Act ensures financial security to poor people in rural areas through the provision of 100 guaranteed days of wage employment. MGNREGA is the leading PEP in the world. According to Talbot et al. (2019:25), the Programme employed more than 57 million adults by 2015 and they provide unskilled and manual labour in various projects identified by communities in consultation with local authorities. This figure increased from 38.9 million recorded in 2014. PEPs are not a new phenomenon in India. According to Desai, Vashishtha and Joshi (2015:8), the country, as far back as 1870, implemented such programmes as a safety-net to cushion citizens from famine. These include programmes such as the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS), which was implemented at the beginning of the 70s as a drought relief initiative. This initiative continued as an anti-poverty programme and was later used as an exemplary model to promote job creation through rural employment programmes at the beginning of the 2000s.

A. Programme Objective and Implementation Approach: MGNREGA

The objective of the Programme is to improve livelihood of the India adult population who are prepared to carry out labour-based manual work in country’s rural areas. Through the MGNREGA, a household qualifies to work 100-days in that financial year and get paid a minimum wage set by the state. Programme conditions allow for work to be divided among household members. However, the Programme is very strict in preventing child labour; only a person 18 years or older is permitted to take part in the Programme. The programme rule stipulate that if no employment opportunity is availed within the period of 15 days after the submission of the application for employment, households have a right, through the provisions of the Act, to claim unemployment allowances.

The Programme is participant-centric and employs a bottom-up instead of a top-down approach. It is also demand-driven and employs a rights-based method, instead of just providing a market-determined job opportunity. The following are some of the features of the Programme, as explained by Das (2013:10):

- The MGNREGA provides 100 days of job opportunity to any rural adult who is prepared and able to work on casual manual or unskilled work. The 100 days cover all adult population looking for employment in a particular household.
- To avoid the exploitation of workers, a legislated standard minimum wage is paid to all manual or unskilled workers in the Programme.
- The Act provides for unemployed adults who have submitted the application or request for employment to be paid the “unemployment allowance” if no employment is availed during the 15 days period after the application. The state bears the costs of not providing the job on time. This is considered a self-correction or self-enforcement measure.
- The Programme used a bottom-up method of employment creation planning, working closely with Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) as key role-players in the planning.
- The Programme provides for both immediate livelihood improvement (through employing unskilled labour) as well as providing long-term livelihood opportunities. This approach ensures the enhancement of the national resource base in the form of water protection, drought proofing, renovating dams and other water sources, rural connectivity, etc., and further contributing to sustainable development.
- The Program is run as a centrally sponsored program with certain built-in state benefits. The largest part of the Programme cost of up to 75% is funded by the central government, while the remaining portion is covered by states. The current implementation approach and work undertaken in the Programme has moved away from being a relief works programme more towards a national resource management approach, as it concentrates on areas such as developing land and harnessing rainwater. These efforts result in improved productivity in the farms and sustained livelihoods for rural communities.
- To optimise resource allocation, the MGNREGA promotes convergence with other existing schemes.
- Progress reports on MGNREGA are tabled by central government through Parliament and by states through the legislature.

To implement the projects, block-level approval is required. One requirement is that the Gram Panchayat must implement at least 50% of MGNREGA projects, with at least 60% of the costs going toward salaries. To reduce travelling time and costs, the allocation of work must be within 5km of the worker’s home. If that cannot be reasonably achieved, a 10% wage increase must be provided to those who travel far distances to the project site. Since the Programme takes a bottom-up approach, if few workers demand employment at certain sites, the block-level programme officer is responsible for seeing that those employees are housed close by.

B. Work Undertaken in MGNREGA

According to Das (2013:2), in the 2012-2013 financial year, 60% of the work undertaken in the Programme across India was for water conservation, “followed by rural connectivity at 17%, and the

provision of irrigation facilities to land owned by scheduled castes or scheduled tribes (SC/ST)", below-the-poverty-line (BPL) and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) beneficiaries at 12%. These are all designated groups of people in India. The remaining percentages were shared between land development and any other activity, including Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra (a project to facilitate the functioning of the MGNREGA), rural drinking water, fisheries, rural sanitation, etc. at 8% and 3%, respectively. The Programme focus on water conservation is no surprise, as it was highlighted in the June 2018 India Composite Water Management Index Report that millions of lives and livelihoods are in danger as a result of the worst water calamity the nation had ever experienced. Around 250 000 people die each year owing to insufficient access to clean water and more than 600 million Indians experience high to extreme water stress. Due to this crisis, the country loses approximately 6% of its GDP. Therefore, the focus on water conservation further demonstrates that the Programme is not only a job creation exercise but also addresses the country's socio-economic and environmental problems. Water crisis is a concern for any economy.

C. Programme Performance and Achievements: MGNREGA

In a study conducted by Das (2013:34) between 2009 and 2012, it was revealed that 31% of the participants are in poor households. But the results further revealed an interesting picture in that the percentage of non-poor household participants in the Programme was 23%. This means that the Programme enjoys wide appeal to the broader spectrum "of poor and non-poor households". The success of the Programme is also noted in that 99.9% of families that demanded employment were provided with employment opportunities. As other segments of the society (such as youths and men) may find alternative employment, the MGNREGA has remained the only hope for elderly women to gain employment and earn an income. Between 2010 and 2012, the Programme at the national level saw an increase in women participants from 48% to 53% (Das, 2013:5).

Das' (2013) study further revealed that household incomes for those participating in the Programme have risen. MGNREGA gives households jobs during times of low demand in agriculture, allowing them to balance their consumption throughout the year and offer income in times of crises, like floods and droughts, as well as temporary or long-term unemployment. This view was further ascertained by Negi, Singh and Dhanai (2015:15), who found a positive correlation between the children whose families participate in the MGNREGA Programme and the attainment of higher education levels as compared to their counterparts from non-MGNREGA households. The study further indicated that the same children whose families participated in the MGNREGA Programme have improved educational outcomes. The Programme has been credited for the increase in school enrolment rates as the country experienced dwindling numbers of children in school, which is related to income, class, religion and gender factors. The MGNREGA Programme has been praised for closing this gap. A significant increase from 38 million in 2014 to 57 million in 2015 in the number of adults provided with unskilled and manual labour in various projects identified by communities, as noted by Talbot et al. (2019:25), is a clear indication that the Programme is making a substantial impact on poverty and providing additional income to rural communities to fulfil their needs, such as buying grain, paying for education and healthcare, as well as other food items.

Despite these noticeable changes and improvements brought by the Programme, MGNREGA has also received some major criticism. For example, in the Assam State, Das (2013:34) found that there were

many irregularities cited by communities in the implementation of the Programme, particularly when it came to jobs card circulation, delays in the payment of wages, and the projects identification that did not follow the agreed process. Despite how many individuals were involved in the initiatives raging in tens of millions, the study also found that there was a lack of awareness about the Programme at the community level, especially among those who wanted to work near where they live.

2.2.3 Public Employment Programmes in Africa

2.2.3.1 Ethiopia: Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)

Ethiopia is located in the north-eastern portion of the African continent and is located west of Somalia. The country is largely dependent on agriculture, with approximately 80% of its population residing in rural areas. Over the decades, the country has experienced widespread famine. From 1983 to 1985, the country went through what was regarded as the “worst famine to hit the country in a century”, which saw more than 1.2 million dead, while more than 400 000 refugees were recorded to have left the country and more than 2.5 million people were internally displaced. The phenomenon left more than 200 000 orphans (Moris, 2014:8). In 2002, the country faced what the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi referred to as a recurring nightmare: a worse famine than that of 1984, which killed more than one million people (BBC News, 2002). The Prime Minister further reported that more than six million people already needed food aid, and this figure of people facing hunger could increase to 15 million early in 2003, if the country does not receive any foreign assistance. These episodes of starvation engulfed the country and dominated the world news, with the pictures from the Ethiopian famine holding the imagination of the outside world. Gill (2010:2) and Talbot et al. (2019:28), citing Gilligan et al. (2009), call this the transformation of the image of hunger and starvation to Ethiopia, with the country made synonymous with hunger and starvation in the view of the world.

The rapid population growth aggravated the problem. It put additional pressure on the limited resources, caused further environmental degradation, and increased vulnerability to food scarcities, as noted by Talbot et al. (2019:28). Rural poverty still remains a serious challenge for Ethiopia’s socio-economic development.

To address the challenge of food security, poverty and unemployment, in 2003, the country, in collaboration with its development partners, launched a food security programme (FSP). This Programme, since its introduction, has been implemented in more than 319 districts with persistent food insecurity. The principal aim of the Programme is to enable food-insecure people to achieve food security and generally improve food security in the country (Jones, Woldehanna and Tafere, 2010a; Lal et al., 2010; McCord, 2005).

The Ethiopian FSP comprised the following initiatives, as outlined by Talbot et al. (2019:29), including their main objectives:

- **Resettlement Programme (RP):** The main objective of the RP is to empower frequently food-insecure families and households to acquire necessary food security by ensuring that they have adequate access to productive land.

- **Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP):** The main aim of the PSNP is to avoid asset diminution at both household and community levels. Through the Programme, financial or in-kind payments are made to frequently food-insecure families and households in return for the creation of community assets.
- **Household Asset-Building Programme (HABP):** The objective of the HABP, as part of the FSP, is to ensure the building of household assets in frequently food-insecure families to improve food security levels for male and female family members.
- **Complimentary Community Investment (CCI):** This programme aimed to create assets for the community and support households by providing a conducive environment for investment. The Programme emphasises the creation of opportunities for households and community investment.
- **Other Food Security Programme (OFSP):** This program complements the PSNP. According to the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2004), this initiative encourages families to improve their earnings via other agricultural sources and expand their assets through investments and savings that would, in turn, promote economic growth. The OFSP covered the supply of productivity-enhancing services to recipients, such as finance access, agricultural services, guidance on the production of food crops and livestock, as well as soil and water conservation.

In line with the objective of this study more focus will be paid to the PSNP. According to Talbot et al. (2019:31), citing Little (2008), “with an annual budget of around US\$500 million, Ethiopia’s PSNP is the largest social protection programme currently in operation in sub-Saharan Africa. It was launched in 2005”. The Programme survives mainly through the support from its key donors, including the World Food Programme, USAID, the UK Department for International Development, the World Bank and other donors. The aim of the programme was to address the chronic food-security crisis in rural Ethiopia. The Programme was initially planned to run over three years, with the principal aim to provide food transfers to food-insecure districts and thus bridge the food gap.

A. Project Identification and Work Undertaken: PSNP

Similar to the Indian MGNREGA Programme, the Ethiopian PSNP is community-driven, and development agents are appointed to work with communities on selected projects. All the projects are selected through community planning processes. A community strategic planning section is called in where community needs are identified. Those needs must take into account the community livelihoods, nutrition, climate resilience, and disaster risk management. Once potential projects are identified, they are then ranked in order of their priority. The ranking of the projects also takes into account factors such as time of the year in which projects need to be implemented as well as the duration of the projects.

Major PSNP projects according to the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2004:62) included “forestry, forage and pasture development, soil and water conservation, small-scale irrigation construction or expansion, community road construction and rehabilitation, and social

infrastructure rehabilitation”. Besides soil and water conservation, as well as infrastructure construction and rehabilitation, the PSNP also included projects that focus on nutrition, health and hygiene. Through these projects, the government promotes behavioural change among communities to ensure that they do not contract opportunistic diseases associated with poor health, hygiene and reckless behaviour.

B. Programme Performance and Achievements: PSNP

The PSNP has played an important role in addressing the challenge of food insecurity in the country. The Programme has provided great social and financial benefits to its participants in particular, and the community in general. Talbot et al. (2019:33) argue that the Programme has improved the income level of participants. Now, participants can accumulate assets through savings and investments, which will drive economic growth. Through the income, they are also able to buy other home necessities to improve their lives. The PSNP drastically reduced household vulnerability whereby they engaged in the distressed sale of their assets to gain additional income (Jones et al., 2010a). Furthermore, the Programme has contributed to the improvement in food security, health and sanitation. These gains include a decrease in crime and violence, which are mainly associated with people’s frustration due to the lack of services and participation in the country’s economic activities. Employment creation has discouraged illegal and criminal activities, especially in rural areas.

Additionally, the Programme has assisted women to be more resilient and improve their internal strengths through economic advancement. According to Rubaba et al. (2019:8), citing Golla, Malhotra, Nanda and Mehra (2011), economic advancement includes gathering the necessary skills, abilities and means to compete equally with men and gain fair and equal opportunity to participate in economic activities. The country has seen a great improvement in the agricultural-related assets created through the Programme, including water conservation plants, forestry, forage and pastures, irrigation construction or expansion.

One of the other notable achievements of the Programme is the opportunity afforded to women in rural areas to have a voice. It helped them establish women’s support groups and organisations that promote and advance women’s economic and social empowerment (McCord, 2005:28). This demonstrates the contribution of the Programme to one of the key elements of sustainable livelihoods, social capital, which is defined by Elasha et al. (2005) as the network created by people who live and work in the same place, community or society. It is a bond and relationship they create among themselves to protect and support each other. The PSNP is also playing a greater part in the development of social capital among women. Golla et al. (2011:6) noted that relationships are created and enhanced between members of the community who work in the programme, and this creates a further network outside one’s family and household. Jones et al. (2010a:2) refer to these as intangible gains provided by the Programme, and they also included psychological security during times of crisis, when members know that they can rely on their network for support and assistance.

The Programme also assisted in improving environmental conditions and infrastructure in the country. Talbot et al. (2019) and Jones et al. (2010a) outlined that the PSNP greatly contributed to the improvement of rural infrastructure, which includes building and improving of community infrastructure, such as the construction and rehabilitation of healthcare facilities, schools, and roads

linking villages and townships. Construction and rehabilitation of water conservation facilities, such as irrigation canals, ponds, spring developments and hand-dug wells, are prioritised. All these positively contribute to improvement in rural livelihoods.

2.2.3.2 Somalia: Cash for Work Programme

In 2011, Somalia experienced widespread famine as a result of drought and rapid food price increases. This prompted the UN to declare some parts of the country in a famine crisis. According to Austen (2015), more than 3.1 million people were affected, of whom 2.8 million were living in South Central Somalia. This situation was exacerbated by an ongoing civil war and the inaccessibility of humanitarian support due to the “politicisation of aid by *Al Shabaab*” (ibid). Food aid agencies withdrew their support from the country in 2009 and 2010 due to the volatile political environment.

Working with the Government of Somalia, international aid agencies and donor organisations supported the county and implemented the Cash for Work (CFW) Programme, among other interventions. Key among the organisations that supported the programme were the UN FAO, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and USAID. Like most other PEPs, the CFW Programme was designed to inject money into the communities as a reward to participants for work that will benefit communities. The main objectives of the programme, as outlined by the FAO (2013a), were to:

- Empower rural households;
- Reach the most helpless households and communities;
- Inject cash into the local economy;
- Provide local communities with work opportunities and income support;
- Reduce the depletion of household assets; and
- Lessen and finally eradicate migration, thereby preserving communities and families.

A. Work Undertaken by the CFW Programme

Community members and households were employed in the programme to undertake various community work activities. The work undertaken would, in turn, benefit the community in addressing the challenge of food security and depletion of community and household assets. Priority was placed on the following activities:

- **Canal rehabilitation:** Irrigation canals are very important in improving agriculture yields for a community. Therefore, ensuring that the canals do not lose water, they must be rehabilitated and maintained continuously. Community members were employed through the CFW to maintain and rehabilitate these canals for community benefit and in the end, they receive cash for the work done.
- **Bush and farm clearing:** Removal of alien invasive plants is critical for water conservation. Clearing of land provided additional opportunities for farming and improved agricultural output, especially for subsistence farmers. Through the CFW Programme, community members were employed to clear bush and farmland, while they earn income. This provided

additional farming land for the community to improve their farming output and reduce food insecurity.

- **Road construction and maintenance:** Access roads and widening of footpaths was an important intervention to ensure the communities are able to transport water from the river or harvests from their farms using donkeys. This also alleviated the burden for women in carrying these on their heads. Similarly, the canal rehabilitation, bush and farm clearing, and road construction and maintenance work meant community members were employed to undertake these activities and in return received payment in cash for the work.
- **Water catchment rehabilitation:** Rural communities and their livelihoods mainly depend on agricultural activities, i.e. crop production and livestock farming. To keep their crops and livestock alive, there was a huge demand for water, both for irrigation purposes in terms of crops, and drinking purposes for the livestock. Therefore, building and rehabilitation of water catchments and community dams were critical. For this activity, community members were also employed through the CFW programme to undertake this activity. In return, they will be paid in cash.

B. Programme Performance and Achievements: CFW Programme

The Programme provided dual benefits to the community. On the one hand, it provided the needed cash to the community and on the other hand, it improved community assets, and thereby ensured the sustainability of agriculture activities and reduced food insecurity. The study conducted by FAO (2013a) revealed that between 2011 and 2012, more than 865 000 person days on the CFW Programme were accomplished, with each Programme participant receiving a rate of US\$70 per month. Of those who participated in the Programme, 30% were women. With regard to improving food security, more than 63 090 households had access to basic food, backed for a minimum of three months. The constructed and rehabilitated infrastructure and community assets directly contributed to improved agricultural production, particularly in communal and subsistence farming in the country. The study further revealed that households were extremely happy about the Programme and intervention, especially the fact that work was paid in cash, as it gave them freedom to use their money as compared to programmes that paid in kind (i.e. food instead of cash). Cash payments increase buying power, because through cash, you are able to buy what you do not have in your household, as compared to an FFW programme. For example, if you receive sugar as payment, it may be useless if you don't have other ingredients to make food. But with cash, you are able to buy exactly what you need and so cash for work is multipurpose.

The study further found that the Programme contributed to an increase in the number of daily meals in a household. This was due to the cash they received, as well as the net improvement in agricultural outputs. Through the improved irrigation systems and optimisation of water usage, communities were able to double their agricultural yields. Communities, through the improved road infrastructure and widened footpaths, were able to transport their produce faster to their homes or markets where it is sold.

The Programme was able to address the twin-track challenge, as noted by Austen (2015), to boost agricultural production in villages where farming is practised, while reducing or eradicating the strategies adopted by communities to cope with the famine (i.e. distressed sale of livestock for herders and other harmful strategies which had negative consequences on both the long-term livelihoods and well-being of households).

2.2.3.3 Rwanda: Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme

Rwanda is situated in central Africa and has a population of more than 10.1 million, according to the Ministry of Local Government of Rwanda (MINALOC, 2011:77). “The country is regarded as one of the most densely populated nations on the African continent, with an average of 373 people per square kilometre”. Two-thirds of the total population of Rwanda is comprised of young people under the age of 25 years (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of Rwanda (MINECOFIN), 2013). In 1994, the country experienced one of the worst atrocities in its history, referred to as the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis. More than 800 000 Tutsis were killed in this genocide. Reports indicate that the killings only took 100 days. This civil war left the country torn apart. After the civil war, the country embarked on national reconciliation, nation-building and post-war rehabilitation. The greatest priority was placed on reconstruction programmes, poverty eradication strategies, and genocide survivors’ support and assistance initiatives.

One of the noticeable initiatives of the Government of Rwanda in the early 2000s, in its quest to address the challenge of poverty in the country, was the introduction of the first Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP1). The key aim of the program was to manage the transitional period of rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Strategy was implemented from 2002 to 2005. It was then reviewed and re-focused between 2008 and 2012 to form the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), as a second cohort of poverty alleviation programmes in the country.

The EDPRS included social protection as one of its key strategies to enable the government to wrestle with inequality gap and poverty challenges. Social protection is described by the Rwandan’s 2005 Social Protection Policy:

a set of public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihoods risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the overall social and economic vulnerability of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups.

As part of the EDPRS, the flagship social protection programme the *Umurenge* Programme was introduced in 2008 to vast track poverty eradication rate in the country. The Programme was conceptually designed in line with the lessons learnt from the Ethiopian PSNP. It is co-funded by government and development partners. This Programme comprised of three components, as indicated below:

- 1) **PWP:** This is the largest programme component. It focuses on households with labour capacity, other than those who are unable to carry out any form of work. The programme provides employment opportunities via the development of public and community assets. Participants from extremely poor households are employed by the programme to develop or

maintain public and community assets. The programme targets at least one adult member of the household who is willing and available to work and is given a short-term employment opportunity.

- 2) **Cash transfers (direct support) programme:** The programme provides direct assistance in the form of cash grants, targeting extremely poor households in the country who are unable to work, either due to long-term illness or as there is no adult labour capacity.
- 3) **Financial services programme:** This is complementary support to social protection, which provides financial support through investment loans and funding to poor households.

The Government of Rwanda was cognisant of the problems with regard to a welfare dependency state. As such, it ensured that those members of the community who are able to work are brought into the world of work, and for those who are unable to work, the state must provide social security support. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the PWP and types of projects and support provided through the VUP.

A. Programme Implementation and Work Undertaken by the VUP

The public works component of the VUP targets the unskilled segment of the labour force in the community. The Programme is not randomly implemented, but priority is given to the poorest sectors in each district. According to Hartwig (2013), a sector is an administrative sub-district in Rwanda and the country consists of 416 sectors covering 30 districts and four provinces. The workers in the Programme are mainly involved in labour-intensive community-based infrastructure and rehabilitation projects. The key aim of the Programme was job creation, cutting the costs of doing business through the development of infrastructure, and improved skills in the community. The Programme was centrally coordinated through a coordinator based at MINALOC's Common Development Fund (Lavers, 2016). The jobs provided through public works focused on three categories of the population:

- **Landowners** – Participants were employed to improve the infrastructure that supports farm owners. The work undertaken included terracing the farmland to prevent soil erosion, watersheds, irrigation installation and maintenance. To create more jobs, increase outputs and improve the country's economic growth, farm or landowners need land with proper irrigation systems and protected from soil erosion and other predictable natural disasters. The government, through the VUP public works component, ensured that landowners and farmers are supported.
- **Landless and able to work on the farm** – For this group of the population, the work undertaken focused on the development of community assets, such as road infrastructure, schools and healthcare facilities. Participants were employed through the PWP to develop public and community assets. Through these assets, the government will be able to bring service to the community much faster and more easily. Similarly, with the improved road infrastructure, businesses will be able to deliver their produce to the markets faster and more easily. This contributed to reducing the costs of doing business.

- **Landless but able to work off the farm** – Both the landless and able to work on the farm and landless but able to work off the farm undertake similar work in the improvement of public and community assets. However, this group is further supported through training and skills development and allocated land and livestock for farming.

B. Programme Performance and Achievements by VUP

The study by Hartwig (2013) found that the VUP contributed to improvement in consumption patterns and livestock investments. Through the wages received from the Programme, participants were able to buy their own food and other household necessities. Furthermore, through wages received from the Programme, some participants were able to invest their money in their livestock. One critical component that was brought by the Programme was training and skills development, which assisted participants to improve their investment behaviour. The skills and training gained further propelled participants to be able to gain meaningful employment or start local trading.

Besides the direct contribution of the Programme to human resource development at community level, it was noted by Lavers (2016:51) that the VUP was able to reduce soil erosion and improve water reserves for livestock and plantations in the country. A study conducted by Ayliffe (2015:4) found that the income earned from the VUP contributed to improved family well-being of those who participated because the income received is used by households to pay for essentials, for example, food, education, clothing and health-related needs. As such, families' living conditions improved. The study further revealed that members (especially women) who participate in the PWP used their wages to contribute to saving groups. These saving groups assist individual members when they need to buy larger items, such as livestock or build or renovate their house. If there is a funeral in any of the group members' families, they also use these contributions to support one of their own to organise funeral arrangements. This has created a strong bond among members. Besides financial contributions and saving together, these groups have created extended families and improved social networks among members.

Pavanello, Pozarny, De la Campos and Warring (2016) noted the VUP's achievements in their study, which are similar to the findings of Hartwig (2013), Lavers (2016:51) and Ayliffe (2015:4). They made the following recommendations to improve the Programme's impact, particularly for women:

- Noting the inherent risk faced by female-headed households and solitary caregivers in poor communities and their vulnerability, it was recommended that they become a priority to participate in the VUP.
- The study further recommended that the *ubudehe* credit scheme be expanded and be more encompassing, particularly for women, as the study found that women demonstrated more desire to be productive farmers and the drive to start or improve their small businesses. The study indicated that women showed more interest in improving their capacity in farming and business management. Therefore, more attention and support needed to be provided in terms of technical farming skills and business management skills to local farmers, particularly women. Furthermore, the study also recommended the provision of fertilisers, state veterinary

services support, seeds, and improvement of local infrastructure, such as feeder roads to enable local farmers to get their produce to the market as well as ensuring that sustainable measures are put in place to control soil erosion.

- One of the considerations to be made to improve women's participation is the provision of childcare facilities in areas where these public works projects are implemented. Many women do not participate in the programmes, especially those implemented far from their homes, because they have nobody to look after their children while they are at work. Safe and appropriate care facilities will allow women to work freely, knowing that their children are well taken care of.

2.3 Public Employment Programmes – A South African Perspective: The EPWP

Public works programmes (PWP) have a long history of implementation in South Africa. Fourie (2006) observed that as early as the 1930s, as part of the policy to eradicate white poverty (i.e. poverty experienced by white people in the country), the government at the time implemented a PWP. This programme was implemented as a corrective measure to mitigate the poor white phenomenon, as recommended by the Carnegie Commission that was set up to investigate the causes, consequences, and measures to address the poor white phenomenon in 1932 (Seekings, 2006). Key PWPs emanating from the Commission's recommendations were implemented, including large railway constructions, dams, and other infrastructure projects. Fourie (2006) and McCord (2005, citing Abedian and Standish, 1986) noted that PWPs, as a government policy intervention, did increase employment and alleviate poverty for Whites in the country. The programme offered the poorest Whites in the cities an opportunity to earn a minimum income.

After 1994, the Government of National Unity (GNU) in South Africa introduced the National Public Works Programme (NPWP), an intervention to address the structural imbalances of the apartheid legacy. This Programme had two key objectives: addressing the challenges of unemployment and while providing jobs, the Programme aimed at developing and improving the infrastructure, as well as providing critical services, especially to the areas that were neglected by the apartheid government. The implementation model included the utilisation of labour-intensive approaches in the delivery of public and community assets and services. This formed part of the Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (McCord, 2005; Thwala, 2008). However, according to Wong (2017), the Programme had its shortcomings, similar to those observed by Abedian and Standish (1986) on the role of PWPs as a government policy intervention. The NPWP shortcomings included: 1) the inability to increase the scale of the Programme to cover the majority of unemployed people and their needs; 2) the Programme was not introduced in a coherent manner; 3) inappropriate technology was used in the Programme; 4) Often the Programme did not follow any particular structure or was not linked to any developmental policy, and its introduction was on an ad-hoc basis; 5) there was no backing provided to the Programme administratively; 6) project post-maintenance was not provided; and 7) the Programme was strongly dependent on government's commitment in terms of funding, and no commitment meant no funding.

The NPWP was later replaced by the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) as an employment and poverty alleviation initiative (Phillips, 2004). But, as the name suggests (in the use

of the word “works”), the Programme was contextualised mainly towards the development of infrastructure with labour drawn from the local community. Phillips (2004) further indicated that during the ANC Policy Conference late in 2002, a resolution was taken that sought to expand the scale and magnitude of the Programme, using labour-intensive construction methods to address poverty, unemployment, and infrastructure backlogs in the areas that were not previously serviced by the apartheid government. The ANC resolution was then taken to the social partners (business, labour and civil society) through the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) of 2003. The Summit further resolved that the scope and depth of the government’s intervention to tackle chronic unemployment be increased. Innovative thinking around the concept of PWPs then led to the addition of the word “Expanded” to allow for services and goods that the government would provide, labour intensively, to the community. The Summit revolved on many themes and one of those themes was “More jobs, better jobs, decent work for all” (Nedlac, 2003). This resolution gave birth to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in its current form, as a South African public employment programme (PEP). The objective of the Programme was to provide an avenue “for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households in the short-to-medium term” (ibid).

Figure 3 below summarises the evolution of public employment in South Africa over time. It includes the 1930s Carnegie Commission, whose recommendations were made part of the government policy to eradicate white poverty, and the introduction of the NPWP in the 1990s, up to the introduction of the first phase of the EPWP in its current form in 2004.

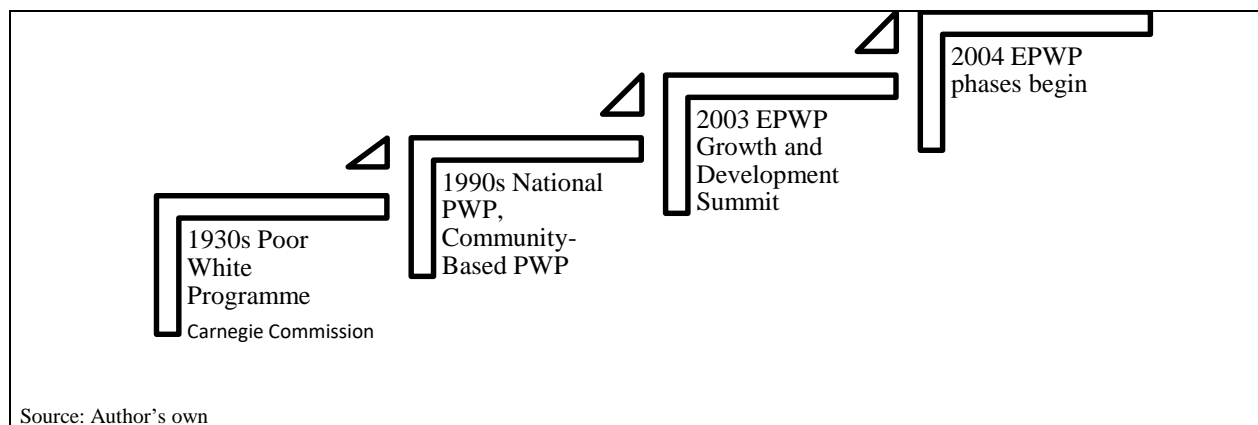
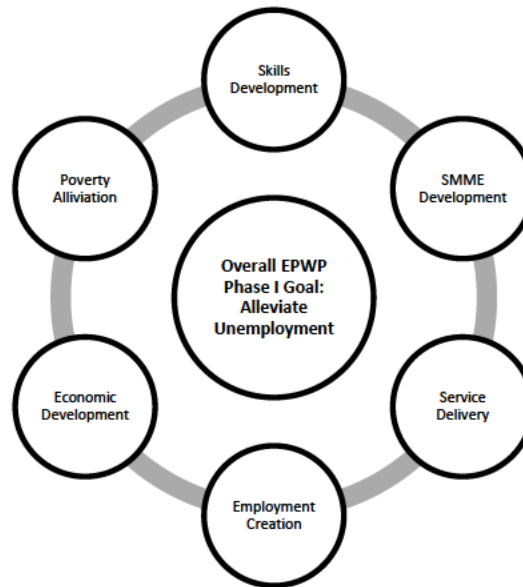


Figure 3: PEP evolution in South Africa

2.3.1 EPWP Phase I: April 2004 to March 2009

The initial phase (Phase I) of the EPWP commenced at the beginning of April 2004 after the former President Thabo Mbeki announced during his State of the Nation Address in 2003. According to the EPWP (2019:21), the Programme ran for a period of five years, ending in March 2009, with the objective to “To alleviate unemployment for a minimum of one million people in South Africa (at least 55% women, 40% youth and 2% disabled), by 2009”. This main goal was broken down into a set of objectives, as indicated in Figure 4 below.



Source: Adapted from EPWP, 2019

Figure 4: EPWP Phase I set of objectives

The EPWP Phase I was implemented across four sectors, namely: Infrastructure; Social; Environment and Culture; and Economic. During the approval of the EPWP Phase I, the South African Cabinet assigned a relevant department to lead each sector. DPW was tasked to provide the overall coordination of the Programme as well as to lead the Infrastructure Sector. DSD and the then DEA were tasked to lead and coordinate the Social Sector and the Environment and Culture Sector, respectively, while the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) was assigned the task to lead and coordinate the Economic Sector (EPWP, 2017).

Each sector has its key programmes, led and coordinated by designated sector departments. These programmes are carried out across all spheres i.e. national, provincial and local sphere.

Table 2: EPWP Phase I Sector programmes, objectives and lead departments

Sector	Objectives	Programmes	Lead Department
Infrastructure Sector	“To create work opportunities through increased labour intensity of public funded infrastructure construction and maintenance projects through the use of labour-intensive methods”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vuk’uphile Contractor Development Programme. • National Youth Programme. • Provincial Roads Programme (Zimbabwe Road Maintenance and Rural Bailey Bridges). • Large Projects Programme. 	DPWI
Environment and Culture Sector	“To build and protect South Africa’s natural resources and cultural heritage, and in doing so, dynamically use this preservation work to create both medium and long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable land-based livelihoods. • Coastal Management. • Tourism and Creative Industries. • Waste Management. • Parks and Beautification. 	Department of Environment Fisheries and Forestry (DEFF)

	term work and social benefits”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Energy. 	
Economic Sector	“To utilize the general government expenditure on goods and services to provide the enterprise development experience through small enterprise learnership/incubation programmes”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives Development. • Close cooperation and owner-managed business support. • Training. • Market linkages • Development Finance Institution linkages. 	Department of Trade and Industry
Social Sector	“To draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work through the delivery of social services to enable them to earn an income”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood development. • Home community-based care. • National school nutrition programme. • Mass Participation Programme. • Community Safety and Security 	Department of Social Development

Source: Adapted from EPWP (2017)

The Cabinet Memorandum of October 2003 (Government of South Africa, 2003) on the approval of the EPWP outlines key roles and responsibilities of the lead sector departments. The DPWI, as the overall coordinator of the programme, is assigned the following roles and responsibilities:

- Overall monitoring of the Programme.
- Provide progress reporting to Cabinet on the implementation of the Programme.
- Fostering connections across EPWP sectors, for instance, using learning networks.
- Implementing standardised procedures for monitoring, evaluating, training, sustainable livelihoods frameworks, and associated standards.
- Offering assistance by facilitating cross-sectoral common programs, such as financing access for aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Aiding the creation of sectoral plans through other sectoral coordinating departments.

On the other hand, the sectoral coordinating departments for the Infrastructure, Social, Environment and Culture, and Economic Sectors have the following obligations regarding the Program:

- Lead the Programme in their particular sector.
- Communicate and engage with other public bodies and stakeholders in their sectors (national, provincial and local).
- Create a sectoral plan, after consulting with other public entities in their sector to:
 - Determine potential areas for expanding EPWP strategies;
 - Establish targets for Programme expansion in their sector, and
 - Explain how the expansion will be accomplished.
- Make it easier for sectors to meet their overlapping needs, such as those related to sector norms and training frameworks.
- Monitoring development in light of the sectoral plan.

- Produce progress reports for the DPWI and all other governmental structures to which the Programme is reported.

2.3.1.1 EPWP Sector Programmes Explained

The EPWP Learning Programme: Learner Guide (2016) clearly articulates and outlines all the EPWP sector programmes and sub-programmes. As per the theme of the Learner Guide “Discover the Vision”, the objective of each programme and the key activities are clearly stipulated. The next section will discuss all the EPWP sector programmes from the initial implementation of EPWP Phase I.

A. Infrastructure Sector

The DPWI as indicated in Table 2 above, is lead and coordinate the Infrastructure Sector and the following are the mainstay programmes of the sector:

- 1) **Vuk’uphile Contractor Development Programme:** This programme focuses on the civil and built environment and seeks to nurture and empower emerging contractors into well-developed contractors to undertake labour-intensive projects. It is a Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) learnership and structured contractor development programme. Contractors are provided with training and access to finance at competitive rates through a recognised bank. In this programme, contractors receive both theoretical (in-class training) and practical training, whereby they implement practical projects with the assistance of experienced mentors in the sector. Contractors and supervisors exit the programme with an accredited qualification by CETA, a good track record for labour-intensive project, sound financial and credit record with a recognised financial institution, a good rapport with a bank, and an improved Constructing Industry Development Board (CIDB) grading of between two to four.
- 2) **National Youth Service (NYS) Programme:** This is a government youth intervention aimed at contributing to the empowerment of youths by developing their skills and enhancing their understanding and aspirations of working in the built environment sector. The programme assists young people in entering into employment opportunities available in government and the private sector. Through this programme, young people are also assisted to establish their enterprises and co-operatives. Through the DPWI, the NYS programme provides training in seven areas of artisan skills, including carpentry, painting, plastering, bricklaying, tiling, plumbing and electrical. The NYS programme provides the participants with both theoretical and practical training. After the participants complete their theoretical training (in-class), they are then placed at the construction sites and monitored and supported by an experienced artisan in the trade they are registered in.
- 3) **Provincial Roads Programme:** The aim of the programme is to offer assistance to all the Provincial Roads Departments in the country to support them in the labor-intensive implementation of their initiatives and programs. In collaboration with the National DoT, assistance is provided to provincial road departments. Rural access roads are the main focus of

the Provincial Roads Program. Construction and maintenance programmes and projects are also supported to create EPWP work opportunities.

A key focus of the Provincial Roads Programme is the replication of best practice programmes, like the Zibambele Rural Road Maintenance Programme that is being implemented in KZN in which households are given portions of a rural access road to maintain. Road designs and specifications amenable to labour-intensive methods of construction are focused on as well. The Rural Bridges Programme is a sub-programme within the Provincial Roads Programme

- 4) **Large Projects Programme:** The objectives of the Large Projects Programme is to support public entities across the three spheres of government to in the execution of labour-intensive projects, with the special focus to those projects whose budget is above R30 million. The programme uses two approaches in supporting public bodies to implement large projects:

- Support is given to public bodies to ‘bundle’ smaller but related projects to make one big project to a value of R30 million or more.
- Secondly, public bodies are supported at various stages of the projects such as planning, designs, construction stages, as well as reporting of the projects using EPWP guidelines.

Through the large projects programme, partnerships between major contractors and emerging contractors are also used to capacitate emerging contractors.

B. Environment and Culture Sector

The Department of Environment, Fisheries and Forestry (DEFF) is the leads coordinator of the EPWP: Environment and Culture Sector (E&C). The key programmes of the sector include:

- 1) **Sustainable Land-Based Livelihoods Programmes:** This is a collection of programmes in the sector focusing on:
- The creation of sustainable land-based livelihoods by promoting land restoration, the eradication of invasive alien species, landscape re-vegetation, and boosting the land's capacity for yield.
 - Making good use of the nation's natural resources (especially land and water resources). Planting native trees and converting specified regions into lively, green and sustainable settlements, as ways of reducing the climate change impact.
 - Improving the ecosystem's and biodiversity's performance.
 - Empowering fire-affected communities to appreciate the potential risks associated with fire.
 - Conservation of nature and wetland restoration.

The programmes and sub-programmes within the Sustainable Land-Based Livelihoods Programmes includes:

- Comprehensive agriculture support programme (CASP).

- Land care programme.
- Working for water programme.
- Working for wetlands programme.
- Working on fire programme.
- Freshwater farming programme.
- Greening and gardening services programme.
- Derelict and ownerless mines programme.
- Youth environmental services programme.
- Forestry operations programme.

2) **Coastal Management Programmes:** Similar to the Sustainable Land-Based Livelihoods Programmes, the Coastal Management Programme is a cluster of programmes that provides work opportunities and training interventions to unemployed people in South Africa, with a particular focus on coastal communities. The aims of the programme are to:

- Improve the quality of the coastal environment, keep it safer, and help the state's coastal strategy achieve its aims.
- Encourage the growth of a fishing industry that is sustainable.
- Encourage the protection and wise use of maritime resources.
- Establish facilities and projects for water farming.
- Encourage effective fishing sector management.

While ensuring the environment is protected and used in the sustainable manner, the programme provides for the creation of work opportunities through the following programmes and sub-programmes under the Coastal Management Programme:

- Working for the coast programme.
- Working for fisheries programme.

3) **Tourism and Creative Industries Programme:** This is another job creation initiative in the E&C Sector under the EPWP in the tourism and creative industries. This programme contributes to the goals and objectives of the government's tourism and heritage policies, with a focus on the:

- Development of tourism infrastructure.
- Development of tourism products.
- Increasing capacity and developing skills in the tourist and creative industries.
- Assisting community and local businesses and artists in the cultural and creative sector.

The programmes and sub-programmes within the Tourism and Creative Industries Programmes include:

- Working for tourism programme.

- Museum services and cultural services programme.
- Language services programme.
- Heritage services programme.

- 4) **Waste Management Programme:** Within the waste management programme, there are various projects that focus on domestic waste management and the cleaning of public open spaces. These projects contribute towards addressing the key problem of poor service delivery in the area of waste removal, disposal and waste management, as well as urban renewal. It introduces the concept of community-based waste management and/or co-operatives. It also creates awareness around, and promotes, recycling of waste material.

For the Waste Management Programmes, work opportunities are created in various programmes and sub-programmes in the sector, and they include:

- Working on waste programme.
- Urban renewal and cleaning of public open spaces programme.
- Cash for waste programme.

- 5) **Parks and Beautification Programme:** To promote clean spaces and environments where communities, families and children can relax and socialise, the Parks and Beautification is a critical programme within the E&C Sector in the promotion of social cohesion. This programme is mainly involved with:

- Clean-up of public and open areas, including city streets, parks, illegal dumps, and cemeteries by cleaning, removing, and beautifying them.
- Aiding local populations in enhancing their surroundings and building infrastructure inside protected areas.

The parks and beautification programme comprised of two sub-programmes, they are the:

- People and parks programme.
- Community parks programme.

- 6) **Sustainable Energy Programmes:** This is a recently added priority area for the sector that concentrates on supplying energy using renewable energy technologies and facilitating energy management through the use of labour-intensive approaches to promote sustainable job creation, local economic development, technical skills transfer, and capacity-building in a South African setting.

C. Economic Sector Programmes

The then Department of Trade and Industry (dti) was given the responsibility to lead and coordinate the Economic Sector. It aimed to utilise broad government spending on supplies and services to cater

for enterprise development support through small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), learnerships and incubation initiatives. The following are key Economic Sector programmes:

- **Cooperatives Development Programme:** This initiative aims at supporting:
 - Close cooperation and owner-managed business support programme.
 - Training.
 - Market linkages of enterprises.
 - Development finance institution linkages.

D. Social Sector

The DSD is the lead department and it coordinates all activities of the sector, with the aim to create employment opportunities that strengthen service delivery with positive social impact. Through this objective, the sector aimed at bringing a sizable portion of the unemployed into productive work by providing social assistance so they may make a living.

Like all other EPWP sectors, the Social Sector also has its own key programmes and sub-programmes. They include:

- 1) **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme:** The programme offers education and after –care services to kids when their parents or other adult caregivers are temporarily out at work. The services provided through the programme include child health service, educational support, nutrition, and other needs in line with the framework of the family and community.
- 2) **Home Community-Based Care (HCBC) Programme:** Through the HCBC Programme, a community receives comprehensive, quality health and social care by EPWP primary health caregivers in the home and community. The programme is divided into “preventative, therapeutic, rehabilitative, long-term maintenance, and palliative care” categories and focuses on the family as a whole. This programme is implemented through community-based organisations funded by the DSD and the Department of Health (DOH) to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS and other illnesses.
- 3) **National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP):** The NSNP aims to “enhance the educational experience of needy primary school learners through promoting school attendance, alleviating short term hunger, improving concentration and contributing to general healthy development of children”. The activities carried out in the programmes include:
 - Improved ability for learning due to school nutrition.
 - Encouraging and promoting the establishment of programmes for food production in schools.
 - Improved nutritional instruction for school populations.
- 4) **Mass Participation Programme:** The programme gives sports coaches and administrators employment possibilities to encourage the general public and schoolchildren to engage in active sport participation, with the goals of fostering good health, self-realisation, social development, and social harmony.

- 5) **Community Safety Programme:** To address the high rate of crime and the need for the protection of children, the Social Sector introduced the Community Safety Programme. The aim is stimulating members of the society by providing employment opportunities through EPWP projects. The programme supplements the work done by the South African Police Service (SAPS) by providing safety and security services in community hotspots, which have been identified as vulnerable to social crime.

2.3.1.2 Programme Implementation and Institutional Arrangements

The EPWP is a strategy that orientates government expenditure to optimise the provision of labour-intensive job opportunities across the three spheres of government and across four sectors. Therefore, the coordination mechanism and institutional arrangements for a multi-layered and multi-sectoral programme like the EPWP tends to be complex and cumbersome, as FAO (2013b) and Talbot et al. (2019) maintains. As a result, the programme established vertical and horizontal institutional arrangements and coordination structures (Dube, 2012). This structure is clearly outlined in Figure 5 below.

A. National, Provincial and Local Coordination of the EPWP

According to the DPW (2015:34), “the Minister of Public Works has been mandated by Cabinet to champion the EPWP, and thereby is responsible to provide leadership on the policy, design and implementation of the EPWP. The Minister reports to Cabinet on progress in implementing the EPWP and achieving the EPWP targets”. This role includes the mobilisation of various means and political support across all three spheres of government. This responsibility is supported by the National Coordination Committee (NCC), with its overarching role of providing a strategic vehicle in which the EPWP matters regarding implementation are discussed and where issues pertaining to EPWP implementation and coordination are addressed. At provincial level, there is a Provincial Steering Committee (PSC) tasked with overseeing functions of the EPWP in each province. The goals of this structure are to:

- Track and assess the EPWP’s development in the province across all the EPWP sectors.
- Outline obstacles to the EPWP’s implementation and think of potential solutions.
- Detect and disseminate excellent practices to stakeholders.
- Provide updates on the progress to premiers of the provinces on EPWP implementation and status in meeting the targets.
- Take into consideration any issues a sector or province may have had with planning, design, execution, and technical assistance.

Similarly, at district or regional level, the EPWP has established the District Forum (DF). The decentralisation in the coordination of the programme, particularly in the local government, is also supported by recommendations made by Mubangizi (2004) in a study on the Working for Water Programme in Mvenyane, where it was found that involving local government would play a key part in resolving the programme’s implementation challenges. The key responsibilities of the DF are to:

- Track and assess the EPWP's development across all sectors within the district municipality.
- Identify obstacles to the EPWP's implementation and think of potential solutions.
- Detect and disseminate excellent practices to stakeholders.
- Update the progress to the PCS on the implementation and status in meeting the targets.
- Take into consideration any issues a sector or municipality may have had with planning, design, execution, and technical assistance.

The sector lead departments, together with all other bodies that implement the programmes within each sector, also have their separate structures that look at specific sector issues at both provincial and national levels (Bokolo, 2013). For example, the Environment and Culture Sector has both the National Sector Coordination Committee (NSCC) and Provincial Sector Coordination Committee (PSCC).

The Environment and Culture NSCC is regarded as the highest decision-making structure responsible to coordinate and report on the sector programmes or projects. It seeks to promote sector discourse regarding sector performance and quarterly implementation progress. Furthermore, the NSCC seeks to foster an environment that will facilitate sharing of information between sector departments and other key players in the implementation of E&C programs and initiatives, including:

- Advice on sector training strategic position.
- Sectorial support for activities related to SMME support and development.
- Finding strategic partners who could aid in overcoming obstacles and promoting the industry.

The main role of the Committee is to advise the DPWI on strategic and policy-related matters affecting the implementation of the EPWP within the sector. This is done in consultation with the DPWI, as the lead coordinator of the EPWP. The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), with support from the DPWI, leads the process of facilitating the resolutions of issues raised in the NSCC or refers them to the relevant stakeholders.

At provincial level, the E&C established the PSCC. The function of the PSCC is similar to that of the NSCC; the only difference is that they are carried at provincial level.

The Infrastructure Sectors, Social Sector and Economic Sector also have similar horizontal structures established at national and provincial levels, looking specifically at the issues affecting the sector coordination, implementation, reporting, and sharing of best practices among the sector departments and other implementing bodies.

2.3.1.3 EPWP Phase I targets and achievements

According to the EPWP (2019:15), the goal of Phase was “to create 1 million work opportunities over the five year period (2004-2009) across the four sectors, namely infrastructure, environment, social and economic sectors”. On top of that, the Programme aims encapsulated a variety of social development imperatives aimed at addressing the imbalances brought forth by apartheid-era resource distribution and educational programmes. Lal et al. (2010) cited the expected wider benefits of the

initiative as: “increase community livelihoods, reduced poverty, and to create sustainable employment, community empowerment and economic growth”.

The Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME, 2008) EPWP Mid-term Review and DPME (2015:87) Implementation Evaluation of the EPWP in the Social Sector indicates that “The Programme, attained its one million work opportunities target ahead of schedule”. The reports further revealed that the Programme attained more than just the ordinary job opportunities, but also provided income support to vulnerable and needy members of the society.

Another success factor revealed by the studies was that the Programme contributed to the betterments of the lives and conditions of the underprivileged through offering “a variety of services and assets so they could contribute to the growth of their communities and ultimately the nation”, DPME (2015:87). It gave them the chance to work, boosting their dignity and self-esteem. Some participants in the studies continued to argue that the Programme enabled that to “put food on the table” using the wage they received from the EPWP. This was evidenced also in the 2007 EPWP Cross-Sectional Study, which revealed a great decline in the households having to borrow money from either neighbours or loan sharks to “live on”. This was accompanied by an equal effect on the ability for households to save money. Through the Programme, participants were borrowing less and they were able to save from the income they earned.

2.3.2 EPWP Phase II: April 2009 to March 2014

Expanded Public Works Programme is implemented in five-year intervals. At the end of each Phase, the Programme is evaluated to identify the success factors and areas where improvement is required. Despite the achievements of the EPWP Phase I, the country continued to experience the persistent challenges of joblessness and destitute. Government of South African endorsed the continuation of the Programme to its second phase (Phase II), which ran from April 2009 until March 2014 (EPWP, 2019).

Despite the fact that Phase II was in several respects a continuance of Phase I, according to the EPWP (2019), there are certain fundamental changes that were introduced in EPWP Phase II. Among the program's notable modifications was:

- The Economic Sector was terminated as a separate sector. In its place, the support to small businesses was mainstreamed across all EPWP sectors where there was potential for small business development. This was done to ensure the maximisation of the existing financial and human resources within the Programme to support SMMEs.

Further changes were made as follows:

- The introduction of the Non-State Sector (NSS) after observing the overlapping roles between the EPWP Sector programmes and the ones played by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other non-state actors. The NSS became a new sector with the objectives of creating work opportunities, enhancing community participation in local community development through partnerships with non-state organisations, providing resources and

services that enhance lifestyle quality, and complete more extensive delivery of service. The NSS is further discussed in section A below.

- The targets for EPWP Phase II work opportunities were increased by more than 400% from Phase I to 4.5 million work opportunities during Phase II in order to advance in reducing joblessness by 2014. Furthermore, the Programme improved the target for reserved groups of the society which includes women, youths, and persons with disabilities at 55%, 40%, and 2%, respectively.

A. EPWP Non-State Sector

As the fourth EPWP Sector, according to EPWP (2019:19), the NSS aimed to “create work opportunities through collaboration with Non-State Organisations and strengthen community participation in local community development through delivering assets and services that improve the quality of life and complementing wider government service delivery”. The EPWP NSS comprised of: (a) the Community Work Programme (CWP), coordinated by the Department of Co-operative Governance (DCoG) and implemented in partnership with municipalities, and (b) the Non-Profit Organisation Programme, implemented and coordinated by the DPWI through the Independent Development Trust (IDT).

The CWP is designed to be a community-driven programme, in which the work undertaken is identified through community participation processes; as a result, it has multi-sectoral projects – including food gardens, ECD, community safety, and many more. Targeting the most marginalised areas, the CWP offers regular and predictable two days per week (or eight days per month) of continued part-time work. This predictable and ongoing employment provides a level of income security to participants as well as creating social networks among the participants. The assets created and service provided through the CWP contributes to the improvement of the quality of life in communities.

On the other hand, the NPO Programme offers a wage incentive to NPOs in order to create additional work opportunities. With the wage subsidy provided by the DPWI to NPOs, they recruit additional participants to assist the NPO to carry out its day-to-day activities. The DPWI appoints the IDT to oversee the coordination of the NPO Programme. Similar to the CPW, the NPO Programme implements multi-sectoral projects.

2.3.2.1 EPWP Phase II Achievements

According to EPWP (2019:21), during EPWP Phase II implementation “over four million work opportunities were created against a target of 4.5 million work opportunities”. The EPWP Mid-Term Review Report of 2013 revealed that more than 80% of the beneficiaries were in employment after exiting EPWP projects. Some of the participants have been looking for employment and could not find jobs until they were enrolled in the EPWP (Zimmermann, 2014). The ability of participants to get new employment is attributed by the study to their participation in the EPWP, which was also found to have contributed to the improvement in their financial situation and their families. The training received and skills gained increased the chances of participants finding another job. The

2009/2010 EPWP Cross-Sectional Study also shows that Programme participants felt that they were more independent and more prepared to look for long-term employment. When it comes to asset creation and service delivery, the study further revealed that the Programme created jobs for the local community and provided facilities and services that were needed by the community. The impact experienced by the community covered a wide range of areas, for example, improved economic conditions of families and the community, less unemployment, improved infrastructure such as roads and housing, better access to services, and a reduction in crime.

2.3.3 EPWP Phase III: April 2014 to March 2019

The implementation of the EPWP Phase III was not different from that of EPWP Phase II. The objective of the EPWP Phase III, according to EPWP (2019:25), was “to provide work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through the delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development”. This objective was crafted with the intention to specify and simplify the role of the Programme and outline the key deliverables, which are summarised into the areas indicated below:

- 1) Provide disadvantaged and unemployed people with work opportunities;
- 2) Deliver public goods and services to the communities; and
- 3) Contribute to community improvement.

The EPWP had a total objective of generating six million employment prospects from April 2014 to March 2019. The Programme is multi-sectoral and implemented through all the spheres of government, state owned entities and NGOs. To ensure that the Programme achieves its objectives and targets, the governance structure and institutional arrangements discussed in section 2.2.1.2 above were re-visited and revised. Figure 5 below outlines the revised EPWP Phase III governance structure and institutional arrangements. In the high-level reporting structure, the Programme introduced the Public Employment Programme Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC). This is the Program’s highest level of decision-making, chaired by the Deputy President and comprised of lead sector departments, ministers and deputy ministers, as well as other ministers who have a direct and indirect contribution to the Programme, based on their responsibilities in the South African Cabinet, such as the Minister of Finance, Minister of Small Business Development, and other Ministries. This Committee is supported by the Technical IMC.

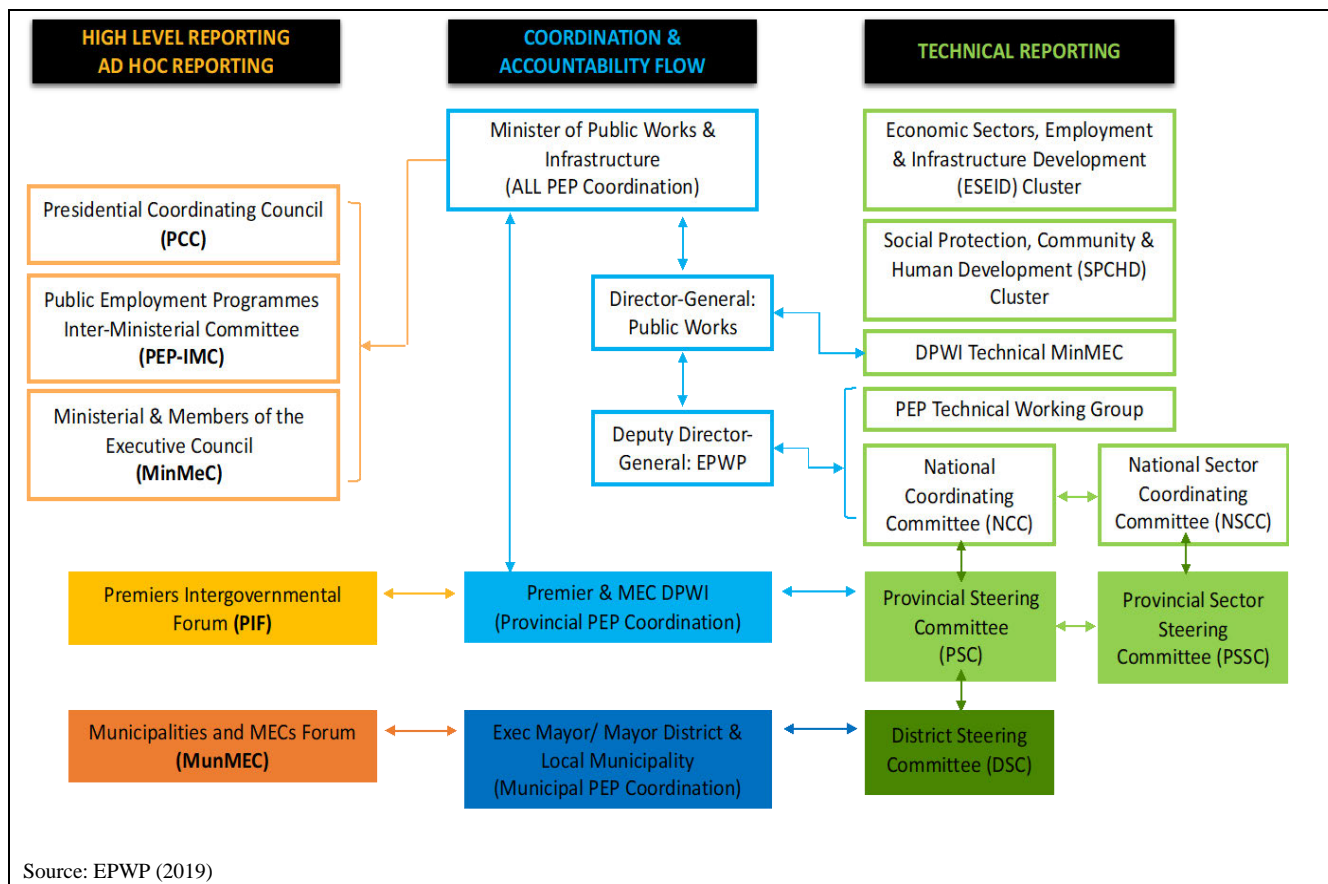


Figure 5: EPWP Phase III governance structure and institutional arrangements

2.3.3.1 EPWP Phase III Achievements

As at 31 March 2019, according to the EPWP (2019:32):

“The programme created 4.5 million work opportunities representing 75% of the target. A total of 73 667 projects were implemented across all spheres of government with an average duration of 90 days. Of the 4.5 million work opportunities created so far 66% participants were women, 46% were youth and 1% people with disabilities”.

The report further stated that more than R41 billion was transferred as income to poor households in the country to ensure that “participants and their families live above the poverty line”.

2.3.4 EPWP Phase IV: April 2019 to March 2024

Considering the severity of the nation’s joblessness and poverty problems, the EPWP implementation continued into what is referred to as Phase IV of the Programme. This phase of the EPWP is being implemented over another five-year period from the 2019/2020 to 2023/2024 financial year. It draws on the knowledge gained from the EPWP’s implementation over the previous 15 years, as well as global experiences. Phase IV contains a strategic shift in the Programme’s implementation. However, this shift, according to the EPWP (2019), is primarily a qualitative one as it places a stronger focus on social protection, convergence, while seizing possibilities for development.

The objective of the programme did not change from that of EPWP Phase III. The Programme in Phase IV continues to aim at “providing work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through the delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development” (EPWP, 2019:33). This targeted mandate, which places special emphasis on the three key EPWP performance objectives of creating jobs, income support, the improvement of community assets, and the provision of services consistently at the desired level of quality, sets the stage for wider development effects. Through the Programme, communities will receive an infusion of revenue, more people will work, and more assets will be used, which will improve lives and boost the local economy.

The Programme target to create more than five million work opportunities over a five-year period is outlined in Table 3 below. Of this target, 60% is for the youth, while 55% is for women, and 2% is for persons with disabilities.

Table 3: Total Targets EPWP Phase IV employment opportunities

Financial Year	Infrastructure	Environment	Social	Non-State	Total
2019/20	321 260	181 458	171 703	307 076	981 497
2020/21	331 072	185 838	174 204	293 376	984 490
2021/22	340 114	189 588	175 253	305 017	1 009 972
2022/23	348 819	193 260	176 474	305 016	1 023 569
2023/24	358 503	197 103	178 120	305 016	1 038 742
Total	1 699 768	947 247	875 754	1 515 502	5 038 271

Source: EPWP (2019)

2.4 Regional Analysis: Compare and Contrast

The regions and countries discussed in this chapter have shown some differences as well as similarities in the way they implement their PEPs. With those differences and similarities, there has been one common thread that connects them all, which is their objectives of job creation and poverty alleviation. Some even went further to include environmental improvement, as part of their objective. This is more prevalent in the Latin American countries. Some of these programmes showed some levels of success and good stories to tell, while others may not have performed as expected or planned and failed to deliver on expectations. To highlight this, one will have to take a closer look at each programme in comparison with its counterparts from other countries or regions.

The *Bolsa Verde* Programme in Brazil aimed at addressing environmental degradation and promoting environmental protection and conservation. It was implemented as a component of the government social protection intervention introduced in 2011. Poor families living nearby public forests were appointed and given financial benefits to manage the forest and protect it against wildfires through creating firebreaks, keeping forest cover or protecting it against deforestation by local communities.

The Brazilian *Bolsa Verde* Programme is similar to Costa Rica’s PPSA, the Mexican PSAH, and Ecuador’s SBP in terms of environmental and deforestation priorities. After Costa Rica experienced major deforestation between the 1950s and 1980s, as noted by Schwarzer et al. (2016), the country

lost half of its forests. But after the Programme was introduced in 1996-1997, a great improvement was recorded. By 2013, more than 50% of the country's landscape was now covered by forests (Porrás et al., 2013). This means, with a similar approach and strong government commitment, the country will regain all its lost forest within 10 to 15 years. What sets Costa Rica's PPSA apart from other programmes in other countries is its dedicated funding model. This programme is directly funded through a fuel tax levy, while most other programmes receive funding from the normal government allocation, such as Bangladesh's FFW, which receives an allocation of 4% to 5% of the national budget. South Africa's EPWP also receives its funding direct from government coffers, while others receive a combination of government and donor funding, such as Nepal's RCIW co-funded by government and supported by GIZ. Ethiopia's PSNP is funded by government and supported by the World Food Programme and USAID, among others. Some of these donors also support Somalia's CFW Programme.

Therefore, considering this picture, one can argue that the success of any PEP is by and large depending on the commitment of the state to lead and drive the programme as well as the allocation of financial resources. Taking the case of Costa Rica again, a deliberate decision was taken by the government to allocate 5% of the fuel levy to the programme, which is a guaranteed stream of funding. What does this do? It firstly addresses the issue of uncertainty in the programme (i.e. whether or not the programme will continue in the following year) and secondly, it allows proper and long-term planning because restoration of environmental damage does not happen overnight. This can be compared to Indonesia's PKP, which lasted for only three years. Studies by Mubangizi (2004), Jones et al. (2010a) and Austen (2015) have shown that an impactful programme requires a longer duration and cannot be planned and executed in just three years. Hence, after the programme was suspended in 2001, government switched to programmes that provided the poor with extended terms of employment and more consistent job benefits.

On the other hand, unlike most of the PEPs discussed in this section, the Ethiopian and Somalian PEPs were mostly focusing on food security due to famines that these countries experienced over decades. While the Rwandan VUP had both the elements of the Somali and Ethiopian programmes (i.e. food security priority), it also poses some key similarities (in terms of objectives) with South Africa's NPWP: 1994 to 1996 and CBPWP: 1997 to 2003, which evolved to become the EPWP in 2004. These similar elements emanate from their initial objectives considering the political history of these two countries. In 1994, Rwanda experienced one of the worst atrocities in its history, the 1994 genocide, where more than 800 000 Tutsis were killed. Now, as part of nation-building and poverty alleviation initiatives, the government in the early 2000s introduced the first poverty reduction strategies to manage the transitional period of rehabilitation and reconstruction and VUP formed part of this. Similarly, in South Africa post-apartheid, the government introduced these programmes (the NPWP and CBPWP, which later evolved to become the EPWP) to address the challenges of unemployment, while developing and improving the infrastructure and community assets in the areas that were neglected by the apartheid government.

Understanding the political history of Rwanda and what the Programme achieved at social level, it really provides another dimension on how to view PEPs as not only focusing on job creation. Studies have indicated that members who participated in the VUP (especially women) used their wages to contribute to saving groups. These saving groups assist in lifting individual members when they need

to buy bigger items, such as livestock, and build or renovate their house. If there is a funeral for any of the group members, they also use these contributions to support one of their own to organise funeral arrangements. This has created a stronger bond among members. Besides financial contributions and saving together, these groups have created extended families and improved social networks among members. This is a programme that directly contributes to nation-building, assists members of the community to reconcile, and so heal the wounds of the past. This is an external effect the Programme on the community, and is what I refer to as the *outward looking* and *external effect* of PEPs in Chapter 3.

When it comes to scale in the implementation of PEPs, one always associates this term with Indian's MGNREGA Programme. Talbot et al. (2019:25) indicated that by 2015, the Programme had employed more than 57 million people, which makes it a leading PEP in the world. One of the distinctive features of the MGNREGA Programme compared to other PEPs discussed above is that it is an employment guarantee scheme, which means work is guaranteed. If the state is unable to provide you with work, you are eligible to an allowance for the unemployed (i.e. government carries the cost of not providing you with the job on time). Similar to South Africa's EPWP and Peru's Workfare Programme, the MGNREGA Programme does not focus on one project or sector. Employment in the MGNREGA Programme is in various sectors and projects, such as water conservation, irrigation, environment, and infrastructure. The scale of the MGNREGA Programme confirms one's argument that the success of any PEP is by and large depending on the commitment of the state to lead and drive the programme, as well as the allocation of financial resources. The MGNREGA Programme is a scheme funded by the central government and is also an Act of Parliament. The Programme reports to central government and individual states' governments through legislatures. This means the government across the two spheres has a direct sight on the Programme. This is among the main benefits and motivating elements to the Programme's success. The same could be said about South Africa's EPWP, as much as it is not an Act of Parliament, but the targets of the Programme every five years are set by Cabinet and are announced by the President. This is also reflected when one looks at the coordination mechanism in Figure 5, which demonstrates how the programme is coordinated and monitored. At the highest level, the Deputy President of the country leads the IMC, which provides political direction and oversight on the Programme. More details are provided in section 2.3.3 on the members of the IMC.

Furthermore, when it comes to the EPWP, it is one of the few PEPs in the world that covers various aspects of support and development across many sectors, such as the environment, social sector, community development, small business support, etc. These various sectors and programmes are discussed in detail in section 2.3. This is unlike most PEPs, which focus on three main areas as noted in the case studies discussed and presented in this chapter, specifically: 1) infrastructure; 2) environment; and 3) food security (i.e. distribution of food).

However, with all that being said, over the past two phases (Phase II and III) of the EPWP, the Programme was unable to achieve its targeted work opportunities. During Phase II, the Programme achieved 90% of its five-year targets, and 75% of the Phase III targets were achieved. One then wonders why a programme that enjoys such major political support (at the presidential level) and financial support (i.e. co-financing, with multiple ministries and municipalities allocated substantial resources to complement EPWP conditional grants to support job creation) has been unable to reach

its goals for job creation during these phases. A pertinent question worth raising at this stage is about the Programme's performance. Why has the EPWP, despite this significant support, been unable to meet its Phase II and Phase III targets? Was it because the support is good on paper and not translated into reality in terms of implementation? Was it because the implementing bodies did not rally behind the Programme? Or are the targeting and the available resources to implement the Programme not aligned? Or is it just a simple failure on the part of the implementers to achieve these targets? This quandary requires more investigation to provide definitive answers on why the EPWP, with this substantial political and administrative support, was unable to meet its Phase II and Phase III targets.

The same could be said about Peru's Workfare Programme (*Construyendo Peru*), which also failed to achieve its training target, despite the fact that training was placed as an apex priority of the Programme, particularly technical skills training. This Programme aimed to assist project participants to increase their chances of getting employment when the project ends. But out of 685 000 people who participated in the programme, only 37% received general skills training (mostly referred to as soft skills), while only 4% received technical skills training. The same questions could be asked about this dismal performance of the EPWP, particularly because the central government provided funding for such training. Is it a matter of proper planning, or was the project duration too short to accommodate training? This still boils down to proper planning and selection of appropriate projects for this initiative. This is a serious indictment to the Programme.

2.5 Conclusion

PEPs have a long history of implementation as a job creation strategy, means of poverty alleviation, and a service delivery strategy while improving the local environment. This chapter has discussed how different countries in: Latin America (Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Peru), Asia (South Asia: Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia and India), and Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda and South Africa) implement their PEPs and the impact these programmes have on participants in particular and the country in general. Critical analysis of the various programmes implemented by these countries was provided to show their similarities and differences, their outstanding features, and their successes and failures.

A thorough evaluation of the literature is provided in the next chapter, focusing on the PEP in general and what main areas have been researched in this field, with a specific focus on South Africa's EPWP. This chapter identified the gaps that prevail in this field and indicated the way this study aimed to tackle them. Finally, the next chapter will then look at the theoretical framework adopted by this study and the reasons for this.

CHAPTER 3

Public Works Programmes, Public Employment Programmes, and the Expanded Public Works Programme: Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

A literature review is a critical exercise for any study, as it forms an important foundation on which the study is premised. It gives an important background, the history, as well as the theoretical foundation of the subject being reviewed. This chapter comprises three broad sections. The first section provides a detailed review of the literature PEPs in general and the EPWP specifically. It compares and contrasts studies conducted on PEPs starting with the pre-1994 period, followed by studies conducted between these periods: 2004 to 2008, 2009 to 2013, and 2014 to 2019. In all these studies, the focus is on PEPs mainly and analysing gaps that exist in the assessments and evaluations conducted on the EPWP. Furthermore, the next section outlines how this study aimed to close those gaps as outlined in the study objectives. The third segment of this chapter discusses PEP implementation challenges and limits. The fourth section of this chapter looks at the theoretical framework adopted by this research and how it will be used as the foundation for this research.

3.1 The EPWP: Literature Review

There are various forms and types of public employment interventions. One of the notable features of PEPs is the facilitation of job creation and delivery of public goods and community assets. McCord (2005) declares that PEPs have become an important and widely used social protection tool during a state of prolonged and severe poverty and unemployment. In her argument, she notes that these programmes provide a “win-win” policy alternative: on the one hand, they provide job creation and income transfer, while on the other hand, they deliver public assets as a real economic investment. In South Africa, as part of the global PEPs, the government implements the EPWP. As outlined in Chapter 1 of this study, the EPWP is a countrywide initiative which aims to provide job opportunities and income transfer to unemployed people through productive work in the delivery of community services and creation of public assets and thereby contribute to community development. The past 30 years have seen a steady increase in studies conducted on PEPs, including the EPWP. These studies have looked at various facets of the Programme, such as the impact on job creation and the increase in women’s participation, among others.

3.1.1 PEP Studies Pre-1994

Abadian and Standish (1986:87) conducted research on PEPs in South Africa (SA) and their study was focused “on merits and demerits of public works programmes in South Africa”. These authors averred that by the mid-1980s, PEPs were a “new phenomenon” in contemporary SA and, therefore, their study was an “attempt” to set out some guidelines on the implementation of PEPs in the country, taking into account the global experience on how PEPs are implemented in other countries. This study was triggered by the 1985 unemployment relief programme introduced by government, where R600 million was set aside for this initiative. To assess whether PEPs would be the right instrument for the initiative, this study was then conducted. Abadian and Standish (1986) provided different

scenarios about why PWPs fail, while highlighting why PWPs are important. Some of the chief reasons they cited for the failure of PWPs are that:

- They have been seldom scaled up.
- There is sometimes a lack of technical planning, incompetence and unsuitable technology is used.
- Weaknesses and unsuitable administrative arrangements in the coordination and management of the programmes.
- Imbalance between centralisation and communities' involvement in the administration of the programmes.
- Dependency on government commitments to fund and support the programmes.

On the other hand, the importance of PWPs is attributed to the following:

- Their ability to provide employment and training to project participants.
- The potential to absorb large labour forces, particularly in the construction sector.
- Opportunity to integrate training and/or educational structures.

The time period that the study was conducted on is crucial in considering the recommendations and causes of failure for PWPs. For example, the argument that PWPs are rarely scaled up is no longer true in the current period because when one looks at the EPWP, in March 2019 during its third phase, the Programme created more than 4.5 million work opportunities (EPWP, 2019) and India's MGNREGA Programme (the largest PWP in the world) in 2015 created 57 million work opportunities for unskilled and manual labour in various project identified by communities, as noted by Talbot et al. (2019:25). Therefore, one needs to be cautious in accepting these recommendations, considering the time that has passed as some may become irrelevant in the current period.

The study by Abedian and Standish (1986) found that the systematic implementation of PWPs as job creation programmes, such as the R600 million funding, is the only realistic option that policy-makers can take, considering the importance and the impact that PWPs can have for the poor and unemployed. As much as this study was conducted more than 30 years ago, it is interesting to note that capacity building and skills development are still regarded a significant component of the programme. The approach and method may differ from programme to programme, but it is still among the key elements of the PWPs.

3.1.2 PEP Studies: 2004-2008

Post 1994, Phillips' (2004) study presented to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), HSRC, and Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) provides an overview of the EPWP with its rationale in the context of unemployment. In this study, Phillips (2004) outlined the progression of PWPs in SA since 1994, which is a period when democracy was attained in the country, unlike the study by Abedian and Standish (1986) that looks at PWPs pre-1994, when the country was still under the apartheid regime. Another important point to note between these two studies is that the R600 million poverty relief programme referred to by Abedian and Standish (1986) only targeted the poor white

population, as the study noted. PWPs in Phillips' (2004) paper generally focused on the broader poor population in the country, and it is well renowned that generally, poor people in South Africa are black, owing to the apartheid policies that discriminated against the black majority in the country.

In this paper, Phillips (2004:12) contends that PWPs tend to receive wide criticism and "are often referred to as make-work programmes" that involve unproductive activities. A classic example was made on this as digging holes and filling them again. As a result, to address this, Phillips (2004:13) upholds that a distinction must be made between what he refers to as "economically efficient and inefficient PWPs". In the study, he recalled and acknowledged that during the apartheid regime, as noted in the Abedian and Standish (1986) article, an array of PWPs of the latter type were implemented, and although they provided some temporary employment, Phillips (2004) affirms that those were fruitless employment because they did not result in the delivery of quality services, particularly for the poor majority. He asserted that an economically efficient PWP must have, as its key objective, the provision of good-quality public goods and services needed by the community in a cost-effective manner. This is regarded as the social objective of the programme. As such, these programmes will enable a temporary increase in income transfer, provide dignity to marginalised communities, reduce alienation, and afford unemployed people valuable skills and workplace experience.

Phillip's (2004:32) study found that the implementation of the infrastructure projects through the Gundo Lashu Labour-Intensive Roads Maintenance Programme in Limpopo in 2003/2004 "achieved a 600% increase in job creation compared to similar road works projects" implemented using the conventional machine-intensive methods. These are staggering achievements of the PWP. However, the study did not make similar comparisons in terms of the quality outputs between these methods.

A similar road maintenance programme implemented in KZN called the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme (explained in section 1.7 above) is reported to have employed more than 40 000 participants in 2002/2003, with a total budget of more than R56 million. Phillips (2004), however, admits that the EPWP, like other PEPs, is not a permanent answer to the joblessness challenge in SA. Rather, it is a short-to-medium-term intervention that still does not cover the entire population of the poor and unemployed. In this study, Phillips (2004) intended to provide an overview of PWPs focusing on South Africa's EPWP, and highlight two key provincial PWPs as best practices and their achievements. Interestingly, what the study revealed is how the training of EPWP participants is viewed. It says: "the programme provides PWP workers with an entitlement to training," Phillips (2004:18). This is fascinating in the sense that there is this thread of training as far back as in the work of Abedian and Standish (1986) as well as later in McCord (2005) and Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013) and many other scholars who have contributed to the PEP field. But here, the choice of words is what draws one's attention. In terms of the EPWP, training was also recognised as a critical intervention to enable that when people exit the programmes, they leave with a particular skill obtained through the programme. In other words, EPWP training became mandatory and this is a fundamental point of departure in the first phase of the EPWP. It recognised the role played by training to improve the livelihoods of project participants when they exit the programme.

Moving away from South Africa's EPWP, Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004) in Ethiopia, using a quantitative research method, investigated the gender dimension of the PWPs with the focus on

Ethiopia's FFW programme because the targeted beneficiaries for the FFW were women, as per the mandate from the World Food Programme, the main donor for this programme. The study acknowledges that there was little econometric analysis of data, particularly when it comes to women participants and how they benefit from the programme. Hence, their study aimed to contribute to closing that gap. They first noted that PWPs were widely implanted in Asia, Africa and Latin America offering the poor with income support during periods of income shock to allow improved consumption. They also noted that PWPs assist in the creation of assets by the construction of much-needed infrastructure, which in turn generates job opportunities as the secondary effect.

Adopting the quantitative research method, they employed the simple utility-maximising model indicated as the conceptual framework for the study: $U = U(X_p, X_h, L)$ (Quisumbing and Yisehac, 2004:11). In this equation, " U is household utility, X_p denotes market-purchased goods, X_h denotes home-produced goods, such as child healthcare and nutrition, and L refers to leisure". The reason for using this method was simply to focus their attention on the variables that affect the propensity of women to take part in public works initiatives and women's time allocation to different activities. As such, this was the most appropriate framework for this function. This framework was used for the three projects investigated by Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004), as they constitute a large number of work opportunities, i.e. infrastructure projects, soil conservation projects, and forestry projects. The study revealed that infrastructure projects generated more workdays for men participants as opposed to women, while soil conservation projects and forestry projects saw the majority of participants being women.

There are various reasons that have been attributed to this, but chief among those, as noted by Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004), is that infrastructure projects involve strenuous activities. These include digging trenches and carrying stones and other heavy objects. These activities, according to cultural norms, are done by men. To expound on this point, Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004), citing Yeraswork and Solomon (1985:54), indicated that an initial assessment established that in one catchment area, there were no women participating in a project due to the local culture and belief system that activities the undertaken there are "work for men".

Other projects are found to have activities perceived to be those carried out by women. In the case of forestry projects, women were found to be the majority because there are many "softer" activities believed to be done by women, and they include weed clearing and watering of trees. Furthermore, forestry and soil conservation projects are implemented for a longer duration and thereby offer some level of flexibility in the performance of tasks. This suits women participants who have to carry out other household activities; hence, women are found to be the majority in such projects.

Ethiopia's FFW study revealed that "the programme characteristics significantly affect participation, with different effects on men and women". Some projects are found to have more men participants than women and vice versa, while the number of days worked, and wages earned by women vary according to the type of project.

In 2005, McCord took another angle in the examination of PWPs. The study focused on investigating the role of PWPs as an instruments for social protection during the periods of chronic poverty. The author upheld that there are various social assistance alternatives available in dealing with the

challenge of poverty and unemployment. As noted by Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004), McCord (2005) claims that PWPs have continued to be the most popular and widely used alternative in Asia, Latin America and Africa. However, the fundamental questions that need to be addressed are whether the use of PWPs over other alternatives is based on incorrect assumptions or false expectations, and whether PWPs are a suitable policy instrument to deal with chronic poverty. It is often assumed by policy-makers, as upheld by McCord (2005), that PWPs offer a “win-win” policy option. But do they really provide practical policy options compared to other mechanisms of social protection? Or are they just an ideologically driven discourse? With this study, McCord (2005) aims to tackle these questions. Using a qualitative research method, case studies are drawn from South African and Malawian PWPs.

But, before getting into these two case studies, McCord (2005:21) cautions us of “the fallacy of job creation” associated with PWPs, particularly since these programmes are very popular with politicians. Government, through PWPs, get an opportunity to claim the direct jobs they create. Therefore, for McCord (2005), it is essential to ascertain whether the intervention is fit for purpose or a political rhetoric. In other words, the mechanism used should be appropriate to the form of the problem. For example, with the chronic type of unemployment in the two countries, is short-term (of two to four months, as noted by Subbarao and Smith (2003)) employment an appropriate response or is short-term employment more suitable for acute or cyclical unemployment?

It is interesting for one to observe that McCord (2005:22) seems to disagree with the continued use of the term “employment creation” when it comes to PWPs. She asserts that despite the fact that the project participants receive payment in exchange of labour, the short-term nature of employment in PWPs on many occasions is open to many questions. For example, whether in fact PWPs should be regarded as “make-work” programmes instead of employment creation and genuinely adding to the livelihoods of the participants and community at large. According to McCord (2005), the employment creation outcomes of PWPs can only be entertained if the magnitude of employment in PWPs is appropriately large enough compared to the scale of unemployment, which it seeks to address. For PWPs to qualify as creating jobs, larger-scale employment should be accompanied by the extension of the duration of employment beyond four months, as indicated by Subbarao and Smith (2003). Other than that, the effectiveness of short-term employment through PWPs to address chronic poverty and large-scale under- or unemployment will continue to be an open question.

In this study, McCord (2005) found that in both Malawi and SA, there was insufficient proof of the socio-economic impact and developmental value emanated as a consequence of the assets created through PWPs or evidence to the contrary. This is by and large attributed to the unavailability of data on these aspects of PWPs, notwithstanding this being an intrinsic element of programme aims. On the other hand, the clear message that is emerging in line with the study objectives, as noted above, is that PWPs are only suitable as an intervention where poverty is ephemeral. But if poverty is chronic, larger scale and longer duration employment creation will be more appropriate to provide a social protection function.

Comparing the two countries, McCord (2005) noted that unlike in Malawi, in South Africa, some programmes have been able to provide sustained, longer duration employment, and key among those is the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme implemented by DoT in KZN and explained in section 1.7 above.

Therefore, to position PWPs to address chronic poverty and unemployment, McCord (2005) recommended the following key considerations to be taken into account:

- Ensure ongoing public works employment.
- Incorporation of PWPs with other initiatives for development.
- Create links with micro-finance for small business undertakings.
- Assets created should directly contribute to the reduction of vulnerability and promote livelihoods.
- Flexibility in employment conditions to allow participants to combine both public works employment as well as other private employment opportunities to earn additional income.
- Increase the wage rate to address poverty and inequality.
- Put clear measures in place to target poverty.

It is worth noting that these recommendations from McCord (2005) resonate very well with the views of Abedian and Standish (1986) on the reasons for the failure of PEPs. For example, their argument that PEPs should not be implemented in isolation, but be integrated and form part of a broader developmental policy thrust. But most importantly, the scale and predictability of employment opportunity is critical to the community as it provides certainty that in the next six to 12 months, one will still be in employment. This allows beneficiaries of the programme to be able to commit their financial resources to longer-term obligations to improve their livelihoods, as has been noted by Hartwig (2013) in the case of Rwanda's VUP, where income consistency and predictability contributed to improvement in the consumption patterns and livestock investments.

Continuing with international experiences and the assessment and evaluation of PWPs, in 2006, Devereux and Solomon reviewed the experience of job creation programmes as part of PWPs. Using a qualitative research methodology, their study focused on several features of the programmes, i.e. programme design; programme funding and implementation; programme impact on asset creation; and gender parities in programme implementation and the rate of women's participation in the programme. Their study was based on five developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa: Argentina, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India as well as South Africa.

Devereux and Solomon (2006:33) agree with the general sentiment shared by many scholars on the role of PWPs. They contend that PEPs are a critical policy instrument to assist in job creation "in low- and middle-income nations which are faced with the challenges of high rates of unemployment or underemployment". This view is also shared by Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004) and McCord (2005), who states that PWPs have continued to be the most popular policy alternative widely used in Asia, Latin America and Africa in job creation and poverty alleviation.

In reviewing the programme design, Devereux and Solomon (2006) hold that the impact of the programme as well as its success are fundamentally a function of good programme design and implementation. They identified programme design choices as an important element to be considered for successful programme implementation, as well as targeting of communities, poverty levels, and the institutional capacity to coordinate and manage the programme. Design choices have also been noted by Abedian and Standish (1986) and McCord (2005).

Beyond the creation of employment opportunities, Devereux and Solomon (2006) found that PWPs in the countries reviewed have assisted in improving agricultural production due to infrastructure improvement, such as roads, maintenance of canals, irrigation systems, water conservation, and improvement of land (i.e. prevention of soil erosion, removal of alien vegetation). Furthermore, the evidence provided by Devereux and Solomon (2006) suggests that workers in PWPs tend to partly invest their income in agricultural activities, such as purchasing fertilisers and enhancing their domestic and subsistence production to improve food security.

When it comes to participation of women in PWPs, the study found that women are still disproportionately represented. This is attributed to various factors, as noted above by Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004), including cultural norms and the nature of work. The recruitment processes, particularly in rural areas, are conducted through community or village meetings called by traditional leaders, and women are mostly excluded in such gatherings. To overcome this under-representation of women, some programmes have tended to use a quota system, meaning a particular percentage of the workforce is set aside for only women participants. However, Devereux and Solomon (2006) affirm that most countries have tried and some are still trying to use the system. But it has not proven to be successful in other areas. An example from South Africa's EPWP is that the initial quota for women was set at 60% during the inception of the programme in 2004, but later reduced to 40%, and by the end of 2005, the programme achieved 38% participation of women. This was much closer to the revised target as opposed to the initial 60% target. What the study suggests for meeting the women target is that a conscious and deliberate effort needs to be made by programme implementers to encourage and reach women participants. For example, Malawi's PWP designated the agricultural component of their programme to only women. Citing DeJardin (1996), Devereux and Solomon (2006) further outlined other creative ways programmes have tried to ensure that women participants are accommodated. For example, in a PWP in Botswana, women participants were given an extra 35 minutes on top of their daily meal break for breastfeeding their children. The same was also observed in the Zambian rural roads project to accommodate women who are still breastfeeding. These are all the flexibilities being encouraged in the programmes to ensure women are not discriminated and they equally benefit, as McCord (2005) asserts.

When it comes South Africa's EPWP, Mitchel (2008) conducted a study to assess the wage transfer function and development of the EPWP minimum wage framework. The issue of wage rate in most PWPs has been very contentious, particularly on whether the wage rate paid by PWPs indeed contributes to reducing poverty. It is also questioned whether the wage rate paid encourages workers currently employed in other sectors of the economy to move and join PWPs, which is called job displacement (Altman, 2006:74). There is a suggestion that in the free market system, setting up a minimum wage should be discouraged, as some proponents of this system argue that it will result in job losses. Instead, they uphold the view that the market forces (demand and supply) should be allowed to determine the going labour rate at equilibrium.

This study found that the wage rate remunerated to the EPWP workers is inconsistent across all the sectors of the Programme. This inconsistency in the wage rate across all the sectors was ascribed to various reasons, including the nature of work conducted and the sectors where the work is undertaken. For example, in the Infrastructure Sector, some projects were found to be paying a higher rate

compared to other projects in other sectors. Again, high wage rates were also found to be paid in metropolitan municipalities and cities as compared to rural municipalities, despite that people were doing the same jobs in these areas. But this is consistent with the general payment patterns observed in these municipal set-ups (rural and metropolitan areas) for other types of employment besides the EPWP. The study also uncovered that during training sessions of the Programme, participants were paid less than their normal wage rates, which was concerning, as it is against the conditions of training and learnerships, as stipulated in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 (BCEA), and in Section 18(4) of the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998. These laws prohibit the payment of training or learners' allowances below the prescribed amounts. Payments which are below the minimum allowance can defeat the purpose of a programme aimed at poverty alleviation.

One of the notable consequences of the wage rate discrepancies in PWPs indicated in the study is their impact on the poverty level outcomes at the community level. On the other hand, different wage rates paid by the EPWP in the same village or locality result in contractors competing for the same labour force, with other workers leaving this project to join another in the area. This affects project completion periods as well as service delivery.

What is worth noting from this study is how it tries to link the impact of standardised wage rates with the impact on employment. It is purported or predicted in the standard neoclassical models in textbooks on perfect competition that any forced increase in the wage rate or enforcement of the minimum wage rate will have adverse effect on job creation. Michel (2008) disputes this notion, arguing that the results only follow how the model is designed because there is no conclusive evidence that suggests the inverse relationship between regulated or minimum wage and unemployment. In fact, Michael (2008) argues that studies have shown no direct, significant impact of minimum wage on unemployment. But a minimum wage rate above the poverty line has a direct impact on poverty levels.

3.1.3 PEP Studies: 2009 to 2013

In 2009, another study on the EPWP was conducted by Phillips et al. (2009). The focus of the study was the Home Community-Based Care (HCBC) Programme under the EPWP Social Sector, implemented by the Government of the North-West Province. The study did not shy away from bringing the contextual background of the EPWP post 1994 in a similar manner to Phillips (2004) and McCord (2005). The government firstly initiated the NPWP, which comprised of two elements: 1) A fund aimed to finance short-term job creation initiatives, such as the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP); and 2) the long-term intervention that involved the processes of re-orientating the line budget for departments to create longer-term or continuous employment opportunities. This long-term intervention focused on public infrastructure expenditure to create more labour-intensive employment. However, the 2003 review by the National Treasury of the special funding under the CBPWP revealed that this initiative had its own unintended consequences. For example, departments were no longer using their line budget on infrastructure projects implemented in line with the departmental mandates, but they became dependent on the special funding of the CBPWP. Furthermore, the special funding was utilised in activities which were not initially approved when departments received the funding.

The North-West study paid close attention to the HCBC programme, because during the early 1990s, the country was experiencing the highest rates of HIV infections and deaths. This continued into the early 2000s. Therefore, the HCBC programme was regarded as an important intervention to reduce the strain that local hospitals were experiencing in terms of admissions. Through the HCBC programme, patients were receiving treatment and care from their respective homes. This was a very important EPWP initiative.

The study revealed the fundamental constraints to the program's execution in the North-West Province, especially within the Social Sector. One of the challenges cited in the study was poor leadership in the coordination of the sector initiative by the provincial coordinating department. This was a result of the constant changes in accounting officers in the department, which affected the programme stability. Secondly, inadequate coordination between DSD and DOH as key departments within the Social Sector was to blame. Each department was planning its programme alone yet the work was in the same sector. Despite these challenges in the sector compared to the Infrastructure and Environment and Culture Sectors, the Social Sector performed better than the other two sectors. To ensure that the programme is implemented successfully, the study recommended a strong political and senior administration commitment and leadership as well as reinforcing the EPWP as a delivery strategy of the line budget function activities of each participating department.

To improve the Social Sector implementation in the EPWP, the study recommended that both the DOH and DSD need to unequivocally understand that they are both responsible and accountable for the implementation of the sector programmes, and thus need to work and plan together.

Del Ninno et al. (2009) evaluated methods and means to make PWPs work as a social protection instrument. In their study, Del Ninno et al. (2009) focused on the understanding of social protection factors that are useful in contributing to its success as a safety net programme. To achieve this, they conducted cross-country variation reviews of PWPs, looking at their design factors, implementation models, used as well as methods of conducting monitoring and evaluation of these programmes.

In their argument, they firstly indicated that PWPs are implemented for various objectives. However, key among those objectives is to provide poor households with a source of income through the creation of temporal work opportunities. To raise or provide the income of poor households is critical to achieving a number of family or individual objectives, including alleviation of covariate shocks, alleviation of idiosyncratic shocks, alleviation of poverty, and acting as a bridge to more stable or permanent employment. But, besides the benefit derived by an individual through the jobs created from PWPs, Del Ninno et al. (2009) maintain that PWPs also provide indirect benefits to the community, such as the creation of local assets and infrastructure.

This study revealed that out of the 37 PWPs reviewed, 38% of them were implemented to respond to the negative impact of a one-time or single covariate shock (mainly macroeconomic crises or natural disasters), while 27% of the programmes were implemented as an anti-poverty instrument. Furthermore, 16% of the programmes were implemented as a strategy to counter seasonal unemployment. The remaining percentages appeared to have few clear motives for the implementation of PWPs.

This study identified four broad design features of PWP:

- 1) **The wage rate:** The wage rate for many PWPs remains low. This has also been noted by Mitchel (2008), who argues that the lower wage rate for PEPs is to ensure that it does not attract workers who are currently employed to compete with those who are not employed in the PEP.
- 2) **Targeting method:** Self or community targeting has been regarded as the most common design method for PWPs. Through self-targeting, each individual, based on their personal conditions and the applicable wage rate, decides whether they want to participate in the programme. On the other hand, the community can decide which households participate in the programme based on a community assessment and poverty levels. Devereux and Solomon (2006) and McCord (2005) also raise this method as the most common feature in the recruitment of workers by PWPs.
- 3) **Funding method:** PWPs can have three funding mechanisms. Firstly, there is government funding, as has been seen in South Africa's EPWP, Rwanda's VUP, and India's MGNREGA, which are all funded by governments. Another funding mechanism for PWPs is donor funding, and a third mechanism is a combination of government and donor funding, such as with Ethiopia's PSNP. According to Talbot et al. (2019:31), citing Little (2008), "Ethiopia's PSNP is the leading social protection programme operating in sub-Saharan Africa, introduced in 2005 with a total budget of nearly US\$500 million per annum". The programme survives mainly through the support from its key donors, including the World Food Programme and USAID, among others.
- 4) **Quality and maintenance:** Most PWPs suffer from a lack of quality and maintenance, and this is attributed to what Abedian and Standish (1986) refer to as a lack of technical planning, incompetence and unsuitable technology used in PWPs. To address that, Phillips (2004) advocates that PWPs must have, as their key objective, the provision of good-quality public goods and services needed by the community in a cost-effective manner.

Del Ninno et al. (2009), in their study, recommended that the successful implementation of PWPs is by and large dependent on firstly, clearly articulated objectives and whether it aims at addressing one-time or single covariate shock (mainly macroeconomic crises or natural disasters). Secondly, for the projects selected, whether they will create valuable public goods or as Phillips (2004:12) refers to it, "make-work programmes that involve unproductive activities, such as digging holes and filling them again". McCord (2005) also cites that assets created through PWPs should directly contribute to the reduction in vulnerability and promote livelihoods in communities. Thirdly, PWPs must have predictable funding, as certainty in funding is key to ensuring that there is no anxiety for participants about their future employment and livelihoods. Fourthly, effective design features are needed. To achieve maximum labour intensity in PWPs, this should be done during the design phase of the programme, not at implementation level (Lal et al., 2010). Lastly, a monitoring and evaluation system, which was originally designed with the programme in mind and not adapted as you go. Most PWPs suffer from a lack of proper monitoring and evaluation systems.

As noted above, the study by Del Ninno et al. (2009) contains some similarities with the one conducted by Devereux and Solomon (2006), particularly as they seem to assess programme design features, programme funding, and implementation methods. However, they then divert, as Del Ninno et al. (2009) looked at the social protection component of PWP, while Devereux and Solomon (2006) looked at the element of gender parities in PWP. But it is interesting, as noted above and as the areas of common interest, they both came to the same conclusions on the design features and implementation methods, including the targeting approach, funding method, and wage rate. These are commonly shared by most researchers in the field of PWP.

Jones et al. (2010a:55) considered the gender dimension to assess Ethiopia's PSNP. Their study focused on the gender "risks, poverty and vulnerability in Ethiopia and the PSNP and to what extent the programme made a difference" in the livelihoods of poor people, particularly women, as a social protection instrument. In Chapter 2, the PSNP has been explained and discussed. The study was conducted as a result of the literature gap noted by Jones et al. (2010a). Social protection developed its prominence in not so distant past due to the role it plays during a period of dire poverty, shortages of food and global economic crises. But what was glaring was the minor attention paid to the part played by gender in the contribution to social protection and how effective those social protection programmes are for women in particular.

The study identified women in Ethiopia as more vulnerable and facing risks ranging from economic to social as compared to male counterparts. This is mainly influenced by gender dynamics in the country, with women having lower educational levels, and less or no access to productive assets, including ownership of those assets. Women also have less or no access to credit and social networks, as compared to male counterparts. This leads to lower economic productivity as well as income generation. As a result, women are at a disadvantage in bargaining in their households and this perpetuates their vulnerability to both social and economic shocks. Social resources are very important for sustainable livelihoods as well as the general well-being of an individual. Lack of access to such assets becomes a barrier for women's advancement.

So it thus becomes important to evaluate if these PWP, such as the PSNP, are able to drive the women's agenda, and ensure that women participants directly benefit from these programmes, irrespective of the societal and cultural norms, as it has been seen in many other programmes, as noted in the above studies by Devereux and Solomon (2006) and McCord (2005). The study noted the posture of the PSNP towards girls and women, particularly with the programme paying great attention to gender parities and gender sensitivity. For example, the programme identifies some susceptibilities faced by many women in the country on a daily basis and, therefore, tries to address them. These vulnerabilities include women's labour deficit, where very few women access employment opportunities, as the physical abilities of women and the poverty levels disadvantage them against their male counterparts.

To address all these challenges and discriminatory practices against women, the PSNP made deliberate provisions to favour women and increase the participation of women. Besides the deliberate provision, the programme also strives to ensure that assets created through this programme, such as community water sources or storage facilities and fuel wood sources, are also approached using a gender-sensitive outlook. It is reported that the programme reached over seven million persistently

food in-secured persons in Ethiopia's rural areas and had a very resilient attention in poverty reduction for households headed by female thereby boosting the contribution of women in public employment activities. McCord (2005:28) also noted that one of the notable achievements of the programme is the opportunity it afforded women in rural areas to have a voice. It helped them to establish women's support groups and organisations that promote and advance women's economic and social empowerment. The programme is also seen playing a greater part in the development of social capital among women. Golla et al. (2011:6) noted that relationships are created and enhanced between the members of the community who work in the programme, and this creates a further network outside one's family and household. Jones et al. (2010a:2) refer to these as intangible gains provided by the programme, and they also included psychological security during times of crisis, where members know that they can rely on their network for support and assistance.

With this being said, the study noted some weaknesses in the design features of the programme in ensuring that gender sensitivity is maintained in the programme. One of those weaknesses is the lack of awareness-raising about the programme and its provisions and gender biases. As a result, some women look at this programme as still part of those programmes for men. Programmes still do not make provision for pregnant women or those who are breastfeeding their babies. Therefore, there remains substantial room for improvement to fortify the programme's gender sensitivity and mainstream this. For example, Malawi's PWP designated the agricultural component of their programme to only women. Citing Dejardin (1996), Devereux and Solomon (2006) further outlined other creative ways that programmes used to ensure women participants are accommodated. For example, in Botswana's PWP, women participants were given an extra 35 minutes on top of their daily meal break for breastfeeding their children. The same was also observed in the Zambian rural roads project to accommodate women who are still breastfeeding. These are all the flexibilities being encouraged in the programmes to ensure that women are not discriminated against and they equally benefit, as McCord (2005) affirms.

It would have been interesting to see what the study suggested as additional measures to improve gender mainstreaming in the programme beyond just awareness-raising initiatives, like the suggestions of Devereux and Solomon (2006), citing Dejardin (1996) and McCord (2005), on the creative ways to improve the participation of women in the programmes, implemented in Malawi, Zambia and Botswana. But also considering that according to the country standards, the youth unemployment rate is a key challenge, particularly in cities, as noted by Broussara and Tekleselassieb (2012:3), in Gambella the youth unemployment rate was at 26% and 29% in Addis Ababa respectively, but it would have been interesting to see how the study recommends measures to address youth unemployment challenges in the cities through the programme; however, the study was silent on both parts.

Providing another global view and comparison of PEPs and their long-term impact, Lal et al. in 2010 conducted a study focusing on the long-term development approach of PEPs and how these programmes can be used beyond mitigating crisis challenges for the medium to longer term to contribute in facilitating economic recovery. Lal et al. (2010) seem to agree with the sentiments by Abedian and Standish (1986) that PEPs have been seldom scaled to ensure that they make an impact on structural poverty and economic recovery.

Lal et al. (2010) argue that there are limited systematic international evaluations that look at both the pre- and post-crisis conditions of the country. However, the existing literature still postulates that the effect of an economic crisis can still be very deep and lasting, especially when it comes to employment as well as poverty. As such, PEPs should be redesigned to not only act as a safety net, but as a malleable instrument as a response to long-term challenges of labour market and economic and social shocks. PWPs can play an all-round role to avoid giving rise to the “too little, too late” phenomena of interventions. As a result, Lal et al. (2010) proposed the remodelling of public employment towards employment guarantee schemes to ensure households have predictable incomes and this will create a buffer during times of high unemployment and economic crisis.

In light of the above, McCord (2005) also recommended that to address chronic poverty and unemployment, PEPs should not only be implemented in isolation, but instead be incorporated into other existing developmental initiatives and ensure that they are continuous. McCord (2005) also encourages the flexibility in employment conditions of PEPs to allow participants to combine both public works employment as well as other private employment opportunities to earn additional income. These sentiments are also noted in the study of Lal et al. (2010) as they also assert that linkages of PWPs with the existing development policies should be created to ensure that the programmes provide a long-term impact on the participants and the country in terms of poverty eradication and job creation. One of the notable strategies to create a lasting impact of PEPs is the provision of training and building capacity of the workers to be able to gain meaningful employment when they exit the programme. Similar to the argument by McCord (2005), they found value in the complementary approach of PEPs with other forms of social protection policies and assistance programmes.

Lal et al. (2010) state that it is undisputed that PEPs during an economic crisis have the following advantages as part of a stimulus package and crisis recovery intervention:

- **PEPs can be promptly phased in, in a cost-effective manner:** An example of a similar approach was Argentina’s *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desocupados* (PJJHD). This initiative was implemented during 2001, and it demonstrated that PEPs can be implemented in a reasonably short period of time. It was funded by the federal government, but implemented locally with the support of local NPOs. In South Africa, the NPOs’ collaboration has been seen as taking centre stage in the implementation of the EPWP, through the NSS Programme discussed in Chapter 2.
- **Self-targeting strategy:** During crisis periods, a self-targeting strategy can be used in PEPs, with participants deciding on their own based on the rate of pay whether they want to take part in the PEP or not. This strategy was further raised by McCord (2005) and Del Ninno et al. (2009) as the most common strategy used to recruit workers in PEPs.
- **PEPs boost income levels during times of crisis:** During an economic crisis, PEPs by design target the unemployed, thereby increasing their income level which results in the rise of aggregate demand (i.e. increased expenditure on domestic goods and services) triggered by the general increase in the income level.

- **PEPs can act as a stabiliser for local development and provide the foundations for recovery and a new growth path:** Jobs created through PEPs act as “shock-absorbers” during a crisis period, particularly for those who have been unemployed for a long-term period and have no skills or educational qualification.
- **PEPs assist in countering the depreciation of human capital:** When people are unemployed, their skills level or human capital over time depreciates. So, by being involved in PEPs, your skills remain in use or sometimes you gain additional skills; as a result, a PEP has the potential to contribute to human capital appreciation.

The study by Lal et al. (2010) noted a strong general perception or myth that assets created through PEPs are of a weak standard or quality. As such, they proposed a strong monitoring and evaluation framework, which will include community participation through social audits.

As has been proven in programmes such as India’s MGNREGA Programme, PEPs are well executed and sustained if the local community is fully involved in project identification, implementation and monitoring. Lal et al. (2010) further declare that if PEPs are implemented for a longer duration as an employment guarantee policy instrument and social protection policy, as opposed to short-term and fragmented interventions (i.e. not linked to other existing policies and initiatives of government), they have the potential to create more long-term jobs, stimulate the economy and contribute different dimensions to the labour market. Generally, this proposal presents a broader dimension on the re-design and re-configuration of PEPs. However, what is not clear from the study, particularly in countries with very active labour movements like South Africa, is whether PEPs, as they are generally understood as “stop-gap” measures (McCord 2005), are implemented specifically for that particular period. But now, how do you prolong an employment programme when you have labour legislation that says if a person is employed for longer than three months, that position needs to be made permanent? The noble intention of the recommendations is well understood. But the question that remains unanswered is: how do you make initiatives that were aimed to last for three months go beyond that period?

Again coming back to South Africa, Mubangizi and Mkhize in 2013 conducted a study on the EPWP. The focus of their study was on how the programme was conceptualised in terms of job creation as well as the extent to which project participants have been able to obtain decent jobs after they have moved out or completed the Program. This objective directly talks to the Programme’s effectiveness. The study was conducted within the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, “the third-biggest city in South Africa after the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality, with a population of more than 3.5 million people”, according to the *Statistics Times* (2019:13). Looking at the objectives of the study, one is able to locate then within the context of the 2004 founding Logical Framework for EPWP Phase I.

The 2004 EPWP Logical Framework identified the following objectives of the Programme: firstly, to reduce joblessness for at least 1 million, which is premised on Mubangizi and Mkhize’s assessment. Secondly, to deliver labor-intensively necessary public goods and services at acceptable levels; and finally, to improve the possibility of the programme beneficiaries to get sustainable employment

through skills development and making information easily accessible on employment opportunities available locally, including SMME development opportunities.

These authors noted that the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality in 2007 developed its first EPWP policy, which was by and large breaking down and putting into perspective what was contained in the 2004 EPWP Logical Framework, with the focus on the eThekweni Municipality. The objectives of this policy, which were also through this study indirectly investigated were:

- To provide for the approval of the EPWP as a strategy for socio-economic development, job creation and reduction of poverty with clear plans on exiting the programme participants, and maximise SMME development and improvement of skills within the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.
- To imbed the EPWP as a methodology in the implementation of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). This methodology aimed to promote the existing models for the delivery of services, public goods and community assets that promote shared-economic growth and development within the eThekweni Metropolitan area.
- To establish integration across all the sectors within the Metropolitan when it comes to the development, re-engineering, design, planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects with the eThekweni Metropolitan.

As raised by Abedian and Standish (1986) and McCord (2005), through this EPWP policy, eThekweni Metropolitan was seen to be trying to integrate the EPWP within the broader policy framework of the Municipality, instead of the “silo” implementation of the Programme. This is captured well in the policy objectives statement, using phrases like “provide for the approval of the Expanded Public Works Programme as an approved strategy for socio-economic development” and “imbed the EPWP as a methodology in the implementation of the IDP”. Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013) outlined the implementation strategy used by the eThekweni Metropolitan centred around the reorientation of the municipal line budget function, including capital and maintenance projects to ensure that in all the projects, job creation is maximised in line with the EPWP guidelines. Through these initiatives, a labour-intensive methodology is being employed metro-wide, while ensuring that training and other skills development opportunities, including small business development through accredited learnerships, are provided to unemployed people in communities within the eThekweni Metropolitan.

The study revealed that some of the EPWP project participants were pleased to have found employment after participating in the Programme, and this includes some attaining employment within the Municipality where the study was conducted. However, one of the noticeable points raised in this study is what they describe as: “the degeneration of the programme into a stop gap source of temporary work”, Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013:37). The programme has become a short-term fix instead of providing long-term and sustainable employment. This is rather an interesting observation made in the study when one considers the views shared by Abedian and Standish (1986) and Phillips (2004), who maintain that PEPs assist people by providing them with short-term employment opportunities and the creation of socio-economic infrastructure in their communities. Phillips (2004) acknowledged that PEPs will not address the structural challenges of unemployment in South Africa, and they rather should be considered one of the ranges of short-to-medium term attempts by government aimed at reducing poverty associated with unemployment. But considering the time

periods when these studies were conducted, it could be argued that after the programmes are conceptualised, they may not remain static over time. In other words, as time goes by, programme objectives and focus must also change to deal with the current problem. So, in the case of Mubangizi and Mkhize's study, the lenses that they were using are not from 1986 or 2004, but 2013 because things have changed by this stage.

Furthermore, Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013) went on to recommend that more attempts to be made to identify long-term employment and more skills development initiatives than focusing more on short-term employment duration projects, which is consistent with the 2004 founding Logical Framework for EPWP Phase I. Again, with these recommendations, which are noted as being inconsistent with the 2004 founding Logical Framework for EPWP Phase I, it is not surprising because the circumstances in 2004 in terms of unemployment and poverty may have changed by 2013, and required a different approach and warranted a more sustainable and longer-term employment intervention. Hence the recommendation to identify long-term employment and more skills development initiatives. This recommendation also focused on skills development to be provided to Programme participants. This is critical in achieving long-term employment, because it assumes that as the project participants receive practical learning and exposure in the projects, theoretical training will supplement the practical learning received in the projects, thereby increasing their chances of getting employment when they exit the project.

This long-term and predictable employment is found in India's MGNREGA Programme, introduced and discussed in Chapter 2. Das (2013) conducted a study on the MGNREGA Programme, particularly focusing on the performance of the Programme in Assam, which is a north-eastern state in India. Das claims that the MGNREGA Programme is the most courageous and practical approach to address the problem of the challenges of rural poverty and joblessness in India. In 2005, the programme was first presented as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). In 2009, it was renamed MGNREGA.

To assess the Programme performance, Das' (2013:11) criteria focused on three broad areas:

- Average duration in terms of the days of employment in each household.
- The proportion of all households which have worked 100 days in the MGNREGA Programme.
- Total percentage of expenditure in the Programme against the total funding provided to the Programme.

Using this criteria, the study found that the overall performance, with regards to the average days of employment and the proportion of all households which have worked 100 days in Assam, was unsatisfactory and in fact declined over time. But the Programme's expenditure over the same period was found to have risen sharply. However, Das was unable to provide reasons for these disparities between the Programme performance and the expenditure. One would expect that when the programme expenditure increases, the programme's average duration in terms of the days of employment will also increase, especially since it has a legislated standard minimum wage paid to all manual or unskilled workers to avoid the exploitation of workers. Similarly, the proportion of all households which have worked 100 days in the Programme should also increase.

3.1.4 PEP Studies: 2014 to 2019

While the study of Das in 2013 was focused on Assam, India, two years later, Negi et al. (2015:15) conducted another study looking at the MGNREGA Programme performance, its impact on natural resources preservation, including water and soil, employment creation and improvement of rural livelihoods, particularly for women. Similar to Das, Negi et al. (2015) focused on one geographic location in India, i.e. Pauri Garhwal District of Uttarakhand State.

The study found a positive contribution of the Programme, particularly to income transfers and employment creation. Through this programme, socio-economic condition, the living standards of rural communities were positively affected. Furthermore, Negi et al. (2015) found a positive correlation between the children whose families participate in the MGNREGA Programme and the attainment of higher education levels as compared to their counterparts from non-MGNREGA households. The study further indicated that the same children whose families participated in the MGNREGA Programme had improved educational outcomes. This Programme has also been credited with the increase in school enrolment rates, as the country has experienced a dwindling gap in children's school enrolment in terms of income, class, religion and gender. The MGNREGA Programme has been praised for closing this gap. The significant increase from 38 million in 2014 to more than 57 million in 2015 in adults provided with unskilled and manual labour in various projects identified by communities, as noted by Talbot et al. (2019:25), is a clear indication that the Programme is making a substantial impact on poverty and providing additional income to rural communities to fulfil their needs. This includes their ability to buy food grains and pay for education and healthcare as well as other food items.

It is worth noting that these two studies have diverse outcomes. Das (2013), on the one hand, highlighted unsatisfactory programme performance in Assam, while the expenditure over the same period was found to have risen sharply. Negi et al. (2015), on the other hand, painted a positive picture of programme performance in Pauri Garhwal District of Uttarakhand State. Seeing the positive programme outlook, Negi et al. (2015) went on to recommend that the programme be spread out to all rural areas.

While still looking into states, provinces and districts, Oláh in 2014 conducted a study in Hajdúböszörmény, a region in Hungary. The study was mainly looking into three areas: firstly, the role and importance of PEPs in Hungary, Hajdúböszörmény region; secondly, the contribution of PEPs to job creation; and lastly, the contribution of PEPs to skills development. Hajdúböszörmény is a rural region experiencing a high rate of unemployment during 2010-2013 (Oláh, 2014) and in 2013, a PEP was introduced to provide employment opportunities to those who were unemployed or receiving employment substitute assistance.

The study results indicated that more than 80% of unemployed people in the region participated in the PEPs, though the number of days of employment differed from person to person. The study also revealed that less educated persons were more likely to participate in the programme as opposed to those with higher educational qualifications. Furthermore, the study showed that training provided through the programme improved skills levels when participants started the programme. What is interesting with this study is the types of skills provided. There were technical skills provided;

however, the study participants, according to Oláh (2014), showed great interest and appreciation for the soft skills provided, including interpersonal skills, self-confidence training, and the development of foreign language skills.

In 2015, Gehrke and Hartwig investigated the role of PWPs in creating sustainable employment. The issue of sustainable employment has been discussed above during the review of the study of Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013). Gehrke and Hartwig (2015) acknowledged that PWPs were originally introduced as an ad-hoc tool for poverty alleviation and job creation during times of economic meltdown and natural disaster. However, with the persistent levels of poverty and unemployment, particularly in developing countries, PWPs have become a constant feature in the subjects of development. More and more PWPs are now implemented and as long-term interventions to provide social protection to the poor and unemployed. For example, India's MGNREGA Programme guarantees a minimum of 100 days' employment to anyone who is registered in the system and needs a job. If the government is unable to provide employment, the law states that the person is entitled to receive a payment, even if they did not perform any task.

Gehrke and Hartwig (2015) avers that PWPs, if they are well managed and implemented, have the potential to provide what they referred to as a "double dividend", which means they do not only provide employment and reduce poverty, PWPs also contribute to the improvement of community infrastructure and delivery of public goods and services. The study found that the programmes can achieve sustainable employment through a variety of channels, but warned that there are trade-offs that must be made to achieve sustainable employment. It is worth noting that in their study, sustainable employment is defined as "jobs that are created beyond those that are directly created through the programme, i.e. jobs are likely to continue after a public works programme has ended".

The recommended channels to achieve sustainable employment by Gehrke and Hartwig (2015) include:

- **Encouraging more productive investment:** This is an increase in the implementation of PWPs so that the number of programme participants can increase. Since workers receive income in exchange for their labour, this will lead to a multiplier effect. On the one hand, the income earned will result in increases in household savings and investment. On the other hand, the predictability of income will allow programme participants to plan better and serves as insurance for programme participants in taking some financial risk to improve their well-being and that of their family. This leads to increased productive investment in, for example, agricultural activities.
- **Increased wages for programme participants:** An increase in the wages in the PWP may result in a positive increase in the wage rate paid in the private sector. Therefore, the overall output is the improvement in the quality of employment and minimum wage.
- **Promoting skills development:** Providing on-the-job training will assist PWP participants to develop their skills, which will be critical when they exit the programme. Besides, better training results in improved output.

- **Promoting economic activities:** PWPs create community assets, and improve infrastructure and public goods. The improvement of infrastructure and public goods, such as road networks, contribute to the reduction of transportation costs, speed up the delivery of goods, and improve access to the market quickly, thereby contributing to business profitability.

Rather an interesting point was raised by these authors as they observed that many reviews and assessments have been made by various scholars on PWPs implemented across developing countries. However, there is limited evidence of studies on the programmes' impact. They argue that most of the studies conducted on PWPs focus on the primary effect of the programmes, such as jobs, consumption, savings and investment. The secondary effect of the programme, such as sustainable jobs after the programme, and impact of the skills and training received by programme participants is very limited. I strongly agree with the sentiments of these authors and I have further demonstrated this in Table 4 below, which shows that the majority of the studies on PEPs are inward-looking and focus on the primary effect of the programme in terms of the number of jobs created, women employed in the programme, and training provided. These studies do not tell us much about the impact of the assets created, training provided and more.

In India, Desai et al. (2015) took a different angle in examining the effect of the MGNREGA programme. Their focus was on how the programme has changed the lives of rural households. This approach goes beyond just looking at the number of jobs created and types of training conducted, but looking at the programme's contribution to the lives of the rural households. This is a different angle that the authors are assessing the impact on the programme from, as compared to many other studies, and as postulated in the above paragraph. The study found that the programme had a significant rise in the proportion of women participants and that resulted in women taking control over resources and improving their ability to make independent choices and judgments about their health. A programme was found to have very strong built-in social audits to improve monitoring.

The study noted that notwithstanding the many positive outcomes of the MGNREGA programme, the programme still remains partial in its reach. The authors argue that almost 70% of the poor population still remain outside the programme's purview. This seems to directly contradict the views of Talbot et al. (2019:25), who have found that the programme significantly increased the number of participants in 2014 from 38 million to more than 57 million in 2015. This I believe is a clear indication that the programme is making a substantial impact on poverty and providing additional income to rural communities.

The programme was found to have freed most of the Indian population whose lives depended on moneylenders, a phenomenon widely documented in the country, including by making films about this challenge. The majority of the rural population is now able to access financial institutions, because through MGNREGA, banks have been able to open branches in rural areas which were previously not serviced. The study reported that borrowings from moneylenders (which is referred to in the literature as "bad" borrowing) decreased by almost 20% (from 48% to 27%). This reduction in bad loans was accompanied by an equal increase in what the literature refers to as "good" borrowing. This is where the community sources credit from official sources, including banking institutions and self-help organisations which are also very popular within PEPs, as they are found in the South Africa EPWP (Zibambele Rural Road Maintenance Programme), and Ethiopia's PSNP, as noted by McCord

(2005:28). This protected the vulnerable rural people from exploitation by moneylenders charging them high interest. Access to finance capital is one of the critical asset in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and is further discussed in Chapter 4. So, this programme did not only focus on job creation, with its own limitations, but it further contributed to the improvement of the livelihoods of rural communities, particularly women.

In 2016, Schwarzer et al. conducted a comparison and analysis study of Brazil's *Bolsa Verde* with China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and South Africa. The study focused on three main areas:

- 1) Provide an overview of 56 PES systems across 19 countries.
- 2) Provide an analysis of the Brazilian *Bolsa Verde* programme and PES schemes from China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and South Africa's EPWP out of the perspective of social protection building and the direction provided by the Social Protection Floors Recommendation.
- 3) Outline some best practices from the existing PES schemes that may be useful in the "design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection programmes".

The study noted that in the world today, numerous PES or PES-like initiatives exist and that in "Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean" these schemes are mostly funded through the state coffers. However, in Africa these programmes are mostly financed by donor agencies. The payment schemes were mainly initiated to compensate for the environmental conservation initiatives and programmes, such forestry maintenance (in the case of Brazil's *Bolsa Verde* programme), and removal of alien plants (in the case of South Africa's Working For Water programme), which are all implemented to protect the ecosystems. But over time, these programmes have evolved to include social activities.

The targeted environmental services are mainly classified by the authors into four categories:

- 1) **Carbon Capture:** These services include the long-term managing flooding, erosion, and soil salinization in addition to providing an appropriate supply of high-quality water.
- 2) **Watershed protection:** These services include the managing flooding, erosion, and soil salinisation in addition to providing an appropriate supply of high-quality water.
- 3) **Biodiversity protection:** These services include protecting areas that maintain biodiversity.
- 4) **Landscape beauty:** This service included the up keeping and preservation of natural resources for creativity, cultural as well as ecotourism commerce.

The study found that the programme design presented a potential tension between the two objectives of being a pro-poor social protection system and Environmental Service. The authors assert that if the programme targets underprivileged and susceptible groups and has a short term impact on poverty. While for PES, you need a long-term contribution to the ecosystem. As a result, they recommended that clear objectives for the programme should be formulated to indicate plainly which priority the programme addresses. Furthermore, in targeting the beneficiaries, the programme needs to align that with its objectives. The authors warned that PESs cannot be used to achieve various objectives and the focus is paramount in implementing a PES. Schwarzer et al. (2016) concur with the assertion by Abedian and Standish (1986) that the coordination of existing programmes and policies is critical to ensure the efficacy of the programmes and their outcomes.

In 2017, Wong's study on South Africa's EPWP concentrated on how the Programme, particularly the HCBC contributed to the livelihoods of female caregivers. The HCBC is the EPWP Programme within the Social Sector discussed in Chapter 2. Wong's (2017) adopted angle of investigation was how the programme promotes women's empowerment as well as economic gains achieved by women through the Programme. Using a qualitative research method, the study found that the HCBC does not have enough capacity to develop women's capabilities, but noted that with the improved training and targeted skills initiative are in line with what caregivers are doing onsite, linking it with the market demand, and so the programme can contribute to women's empowerment. It is intriguing to observe that these results, particularly on skills development, also mirror the recommendations by Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013) outlined above, besides the fact that these studies are almost seven years apart.

This outcome was further observed in the findings of the EPWP Mid-Term Review (2008), McCord (2005) and Lal et al. (2010), who noted that capacity building and development of skills for the EPWP participants have a great potential to increase the employability of the project participants after they exit the Programme, and that accredited training linked to exit opportunities is to be provided to programme participants. Dladla and Mutambara (2018) investigated the contribution of the EPWP training intervention to small businesses. One of the EPWP initiatives is developing and supporting SMMEs created through the EPWP. This research revealed that the vast majority of the participants in the Programme indicated that EPWP training assisted them as individuals as well as improved their businesses, when it comes to management and getting additional business contracts. It is a well-known fact that the small business sector is a catalyst for job creation in both developed and under-developed countries (Katua, 2014). Therefore, supporting small businesses has a direct effect on job creation and this further talks to the objectives of the EPWP.

Contrary to the sentiments of these studies and the founding principles of the EPWP, as articulated in the 2004 Logical Framework for EPWP Phase I. When EPWP Phase III and Phase IV were introduced in (2014 to 2019) and (2019 to 2024) respectively, training and skills development status was dropped from being mandatory on all EPWP projects, as was the case in EPWP Phase I. The EPWP Phase IV Business Plan (EPWP, 2019) indicates that "training will remain critical but not compulsory". This statement diminishes the status of training and gives leeway to all EPWP implementing bodies not to prioritise training, which would otherwise help meet objective 3 (Empowerment) of the EPWP 2004 Founding Logical Framework (as outlined in Table 5 below), thereby reducing the chances of project participants getting employment after exiting the projects or starting their own businesses.

The assessment of the performance of the EPWP Phase I conducted by Phillips et al. (2009) in North-West Province is another classical case of the programme's evaluation that focused on job creation, assets created, and wages earned by the participants. The study gives details of job opportunities created in the province. For example, the study found that the Social Sector contributed to more than 50% of the overall provincial performance with its leading programmes such as ECD and HCBC, and coincidentally, the study by Wong (2017) was also based on this programme in the North-West Province. Meanwhile, the Infrastructure Sector contributed 36% to the overall provincial performance, despite the fact that the Infrastructure Sector accounts for 60% of the total provincial targets. These findings are clear indications of under-performance of the sector during the first phase

of the EPWP. The point that one tries to put across with this analysis other than the sectors' performance is on the indicators that the study focused on, i.e. job creation.

The other facet of the programme investigated by Zimmermann (2014) in his study of PWP in developing countries was mainly the design factors which assist the programme to alleviate poverty. Those factors include the accurate identification of the target population to ensure that the right people benefit from the programme, the selection of the relevant wage rate, because it can be argued that if one selects a high wage rate, this will result in more people wanting to join the programme, including those who are currently employed at a lower wage. The higher wage rate will attract people who are already employed to leave their jobs and join the programme, while choosing a very low wage rate defeats the very purpose of poverty alleviation and keeping people trapped in the poverty circle. Therefore, a balance in the selection of the wage rate needs to be reached. This is what the study by Zimmermann (2014) focuses on. Zimmermann (2014) found that PWPs offer a safety net for households during and after the economic crisis and recruiting from the targeted population and the appropriate rate is important in ensuring that the poor and vulnerable receive this cushion. This is supported by the findings of Oláh (2014), McCord (2005) and Phillips (2004).

The study also noted that corruption, mismanagement, and other implementation challenges have a great potential to reduce the impact of the Programme and its effectiveness in delivering of job creation. Zimmermann's (2014) study focuses on job creation and how the established institutions assist in maximising and efficiently create jobs. All these are "in-ward looking and programme impact paradigms" discussed in the next section.

While one is still dealing with the "in-ward looking programmes impact", Oláh (2014) claims that PEPs are critical tools for reducing unemployment and its impacts on the community. In her study of the role and importance of public employment in Hungary, she noted that the country's high levels of rate of joblessness was ascribed to the late 18th century Industrial Revolution, which left a trail of people unemployed due to the introduction of machines. The disruption of the formal labour market then required an intervention to cushion the poor and unemployed as well as complement jobs created by the private sector. Therefore, PEPs played a critical role in job creation and poverty alleviation for those who lost their jobs.

On 1 January 2011, the Hungarian government established the National Public Employment Programme which aimed at creating job opportunities for the unemployed working population. Oláh's (2014) study focused on three main areas: 1) Employment history of the participants as well as what they would like to do after the programme; 2) Skills development (i.e. did they receive any training and what was the impact and usefulness of the training received in getting other jobs after the programme); and 3) Satisfaction with public employment, and whether the project participants are satisfied with the programme. Oláh's (2014) study objectives too, like Zimmermann (2014) and Phillips (2004), are focused on the project participants and the benefits derived from being involved in the programme.

Bokolo (2013) also avers that PEPs have been preferred by most governments as a result of their potential to generate employment and develop skills for the project participants. In this study, Bokolo (2013) focused on the impact that the training of EPWP participants has on the chances of getting

jobs as well as improving their skills in general. The study raised general concerns about the EPWP, particularly when it comes to job creation and skills development. One of those concerns was the average duration of the job opportunities that the program created. Most jobs have a shorter period, and that makes it difficult for the programme to contribute immensely in reducing unemployment. This was also noted by Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013). Furthermore, the study outlines that the training offered to the participants of project is often short and not accredited. This then poses a challenge when participants exit the programme because non-accredited training is not often recognised by the employer, and it is even worse if it is of a shorter duration.

One of the observations that one makes in evaluating studies on PEPs is that many authors are careful in raising the concept of “sustainable employment”, especially when one talks about PEPs without defining this term, particularly from the premise that PEPs by design are not meant to provide permanent solutions to unemployment challenges, as Phillips (2004) attests. Phillips (2004:34) further acknowledged that PEPs will not resolve the challenges of joblessness in the Country. They are rather one range of short-to-medium-term attempts by government meant at reducing “poverty associated with unemployment”. It was rather unorthodox when Bokolo (2013) argues that jobs created through the EPWP were unsustainable, considering the above facts. A similar argument was also advanced by Gehrke and Hartwig (2015), but they were clear in defining the term “sustainable employment” by referring to jobs created after the PEP has ended. They introduced a “double dividend” concept as an important benefit that the programmes bring to the communities. Meaning, on the one hand, PEPs assist in reducing poverty through the direct transfer of income to poor families meanwhile assisting in development and maintenance of community assets and infrastructure or the provision of critical public goods and services. Therefore, in this argument, a clear message is transmitted that the whole conception of PEPs should not be looked at in isolation from other contributions it makes to the society, in this case, the income transferred to poor communities.

However, these expositions are still unsatisfactory because they all form part of the inward-looking and internal effect paradigms of the programme discussed in the section below. Other typical examples of studies focusing on these objectives of the programme are found in the articles by Hartwig (2013) investigating the effects of Rwanda’s VUP and Jones et al. (2010a) exploring the extent of the PSNP in Ethiopia in making a difference in the community. These two studies looked at how these programmes contributed to security of food and income earning, either in cash or in kind (i.e. in the form of food parcels).

The results of the VUP investigation shows that there was a significant increase in the household food consumption as well as their livestock investment. But the fear of the households to fall back to their original position after exiting the programme could not be quashed. Contrary to this, the study by Escudero (2016) found that the VUP positively impacted on the employability of project participants after exiting the programme. This could be attributed to various factors, including training of project participants while they are employed, as Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013) and Bokolo (2013) argues, including keeping project participants in the programme for a longer duration for them to improve their practical skills. By the same token, Jones et al. (2010a:55) indicated that the Ethiopian PSNP reached more than “seven million chronically food-insecure people, particularly in rural areas” in line with its objective to address poverty. The report further indicates that the greatest number of beneficiaries of the programme were households headed by females. The participation of households

headed by females in the programme is not just a numbers game, as noted by Tanzarn and Gutierrez (2015:27) in their study “The gender dimension revisited in employment-intensive investment programmes in 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean”. In the study, they cite the broadening of the scope in the PEP to include women beyond the typically permissible areas, and this includes women taking part in infrastructure projects. For example, South Africa’s EPWP (2019) has a mandatory target of 60% for women’s participation in all the projects.

The conceptual shifts in the thinking about the meaning of gender are slowly filtering through to public works. Whereas the major gender mainstreaming emphasis continues to be on increasing women’s representation, there is a good attempt to move beyond the numbers (Tanzarn and Gutierrez, 2015).

Encouraging the participation of women in PEPs, Tanzarn and Gutierrez (2015) say that it indirectly assists in creating social awareness when it comes to gender and also in reducing gender stereotypes that still persist in society, especially about what women can and cannot do. By the same token, considering that women are still more susceptible to poverty and other social ills, well-targeted PEPs have a great potential to address these challenges and increase the chances for women to get employment. Quisumbing and Yisehac (2004) claim that a growing and large amount of evidence points out that resources in women’s hands have a greater and favourable impact on the key needs of the households, including food security, investments in children’s education, nutrition and health. Quisumbing and Yisehac’s (2004) study also investigated the gender dimension of the PEP in Ethiopia focusing on the FFW Programme. The study found that despite the Programme having an 80% target for women-headed households to be contracted in the Programme, only 26% of those contracted were women. The study further indicated that men still enjoyed advantages over women in this programme in terms of the wages paid. The study found that men still earn almost double what their women counterparts earn, despite doing the same job. This finding clearly exposes the lack of compliance with the principle championed by the ILO (2016:2) of the “same pay for the same job/task”. Gender mainstreaming is an important step that needs to be taken by the Ethiopian FFW Programme. To continue emphasising the need to increase women’s representation in the Programme is an important priority, referred to by Tanzarn and Gutierrez (2015) as an “affirmative action” strategy to mainstream gender in PEPs.

The above two case studies by Tanzarn and Gutierrez (2015) and Jones et al. (2010) about Ethiopian’s FFW Programme and the PSNP respectively present another dimension of the areas where PEP studies are focusing on. This dimension is the employment of women in the PEPs. As much as it falls within the category of employment, the focus of the programme is mainly on women.

The World Bank report by Del Ninno et al. (2009) investigated the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of PEPs as a safety net to respond to large economic shocks and/or repeated shocks. The study, as noted by McCord (2005), revealed that PEPs have been widely used as an anti-poverty strategy to address the problems of unemployment and mitigate income shocks. Del Ninno et al. (2009) affirm that PEPs are capable of preventing the negative effect of the lack of income on poor communities, thus decreasing both temporal and cyclic poverty, while creating useful community assets and services. The study then outlined key important factors to be considered in the successful execution of the PEPs:

- Firstly, project selection: One needs to clearly define the objectives of the programme; the projects selected must create valuable public good and community assets; and have a predictable source of funding.
- Secondly, project design: The programme needs to be carefully designed and incorporate all key design features.
- Lastly, monitoring and evaluation: A reliable monitoring and evaluation system can be developed from the inception of the programme to ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

While Del Ninno et al. (2009) focused on the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of PEPs as a safety net, Devereux and Solomon (2006) broadly looked at an array of employment creation programmes, with the intention to share international experiences and best practices on the implementation of employment creation programmes, particularly labour market impact. For example, in their assessment of the EPWP, the study found that the programme reached a very small percentage (less than 3%) of the unemployed population during its Phase I implementation, and therefore, if the Programme has to make an impact on unemployment challenges, it must be scaled up as well as increasing the employment duration. It was observed that the average employment duration in the programme ranges between three and six months; however, this may also vary from project to project and from sector to sector. While in assessing the PK Programme of Indonesia, the study found that the programme was able to prevent between 7% - 11% of the population sliding below poverty lines. These were not the only programmes assessed and evaluated by Devereux and Solomon (2009) and they included Bangladesh's FFW and Argentina's *Trabajar* and *Jefes* programmes focusing on food security and the creation of community assets for poor communities. These assessments, like most of the studies undertaken on PEPs, looked at job creation, poverty alleviation through food security and creation of community assets.

Nirmal et al. (2009) assessed the Maoist conflict, community forestry and livelihoods in Nepal. This study took an interesting turn on the phenomenon of the impact of violent conflict on development. Similar to Rwanda's VUP implemented as a job creation and poverty alleviation programme as a main strategy to manage the transitional period of rehabilitation and reconstruction post-civil war conflict. Nepal experienced something similar to Rwanda in what was referred to as the Maoist conflict when the government used the opportunity that arose after this conflict to create initiatives to generate jobs, especially for rural communities, unite people, and protect the environment through a forest management programme in the country. The study found that there was an increase in the participation of women in the programme and the programme brought marginalised groups into the mainstream through job creation and empowered them to raise their issues with traditional leadership freely.

To add to the list of impact studies conducted on PEPs is a localised impact assessment of the MGNREGA Programme in a district of Garhwal in Uttarakhand, which was also conducted by Negi et al. (2015). The study looked at various areas in which the Programme contributes. They focused on three key areas:

- The programme impact on natural resources, which includes water, soil and other natural resources.
- The programme impact on job creation for rural sustainable livelihoods.
- The participation of women in the programme.

The study found that the programme immensely contributed to the improvement and management of natural resources and created many work opportunities for poor and unemployed rural communities. However, one of the recommendations made by Negi et al. (2015) for the improved impact of the programmes was to increase the scale of the programme and recruit more rural communities to progress their livelihoods. Like Devereux and Solomon (2006) recommended for the EPWP, Negi et al. (2015) also made similar recommendations that the programme duration last more than 100 days to make a meaningful contribution to the livelihoods of rural communities. Again here, one notes the emphasis and focus areas of the study are the three main areas outlined in Table 4 and 5 below. These areas are job creation, community assets and environment management, and empowerment.

Empirical studies conducted on the EPWP and PEPs, in general, are summarised in Table 4 below, and in my observation and assessment, all these studies focus on four main themes:

- 1) **Job Creation (JC)** – This refers to studies whose primary purpose is to look at job creation, the impact of the EPWP or PEPs in general on job creation, the effectiveness of EPWP on job creation and many related objectives.
- 2) **Public Goods, Assets and Community Services (PG/A/CS)** – This refers to studies whose primary purpose is to investigate the EPWP or PEPs in general on the creation of public assets, public goods, community service and many other related objectives including environmental management and nature conservation.
- 3) **Empowerment** – This refers to studies whose primary aim is to assess and investigate the effectiveness of EPWP or PEPs in general on capacity building, capacity development of the participants. Capacity development includes theoretical or practical training and many other interventions aimed to improve the ability of the participant to perform and execute their duties or improve their opportunities to get employment after the project has ended. Furthermore, this theme also includes studies to focusing on vulnerable groups in societies such as women, youth and persons with disabilities.
- 4) **Monetary Gains (MG)** – this refers to studies who primary focus is to assess effect of financial benefits, wages or stipends to the project participant. Also looking at whether these financial benefits are above or below the minimum standards, whether or not they are able to pull-out the project participants out of poverty and many related factors.

However, it is worth mentioning that this list in Table 4 is not exhaustive. This list is compiled by firstly looking at the research methods used for each study, followed by the key objectives and what the study focuses on or aimed to achieve. This is defined in the above points 1) to 4). These objectives are grouped and classified according to these four themes for easy reference, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of regularly discussed EPWP empirical studies and reported outcomes

No.	Study title and year	Focus Area	Research Method	Thematic Dimension of the studies/Focus Area			
				JC*	PG/A/CS*	E*	MG*
1.	Public works programme in South Africa: Coming to terms with reality (Abedian and Standish, 1986).	Merits and demerits of implementing public works programmes in South Africa and guidelines in the implementation of public works programmes in the country.	Qualitative	✓	✓		
2.	The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP): Overcoming underdevelopment in South Africa's second economy (Phillips, 2004).	Overview of the EPWP with its rationale in the context of unemployment and evolution of PWP in South Africa since 1994.	Qualitative	✓	✓		
3.	How Fair is Workfare? Gender, public works and employment in rural Ethiopia (Quisumbing and Yisehac, 2004).	Gender dimension of the PWPs particularly in Ethiopian's Food For Work (FFW) programme.	Quantitative	✓			
4.	Win-win or lose-lose? An Examination of the Use of Public Works as a Social Protection Instrument in Situations of Chronic Poverty. McCord (2005).	The role of PWPs as social protection instrument in situations of chronic poverty	Qualitative	✓	✓		✓
5.	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach for Assessing Community Resilience to Climate Change: Case Studies from Sudan (Elasha et al., 2005).	PEPs: Impacts and Adaptations of Climate Change to sustainable livelihoods	Qualitative	✓	✓		
6.	Employment creation programmes: The international experience (Devereux and Solomon, 2006).	Several features of the PEP: (programmes design; programmes funding and implementation; programmes impact on assets creation; as well as consideration on gender parities in programmes implementation and the rate of women participation in the programmes).	Qualitative	✓	✓		✓
7.	Assessing the wage transfer function of and developing a minimum wage framework for the Expanded Public Works Programme in South Africa. Mitchel (2008).	The wage transfer function and development of the EPWP minimum wage framework	Qualitative and Quantitative	✓			✓

No.	Study title and year	Focus Area	Research Method	Thematic Dimension of the studies/Focus Area			
				JC*	PG/A/CS*	E*	MG*
8.	Maoist Conflict, Community Forestry and Livelihoods: Pro-poor Innovations in Forest Management in Nepal (Nirmal et al., 2009).	The impact of the conflict vis-à-vis livelihoods and forestry job creation programme interventions	Qualitative	✓	✓		
9.	Evaluation of the Expanded Public Works Programme in North-West. Human Science Research Council and Centre for Poverty Employment and Growth (Phillips et al., 2009).	To access the implementation of the Social Sector: HCBC programme in the North-West and whether the programme will achieve its intended outcome and the end of EPWP Phase 2.	Qualitative	✓	✓		✓
10.	How to make public works work: A review of the experiences, Social Protection (Del Ninno et al., 2009).	Role of public works programmes as social protection instrument and understanding of factors that are useful for public works programme in contributing to its success as safety net programme	Qualitative	✓		✓	
11.	Gendered Risks, Poverty and Vulnerability in Ethiopia: To What Extent is the Productive Safety Net Programme Making a Difference (Jones et al., 2010a).	The gender risks, poverty and vulnerability in Ethiopia PSNP and to what extent does the programme make difference in the livelihoods of the poor people, particularly, women as a social protection instrument.	Qualitative and Quantitative	✓			✓
12.	Public works and employment programmes: Towards a long-term development approach (Lal et al., 2010).	The long-term development approach of PEPs and how these programmes can be used beyond mitigating crisis challenges but for a medium to longer term to contribute to facilitating economic recovery.	Qualitative	✓	✓		
13.	To what extent is the Productive Safety Net Programme making a difference? (Jones et al., 2010a).	Ethiopia PSNP and to what extent does the programme make difference in the livelihoods of the poor people, particularly, women as a social protection instrument.	Qualitative and Quantitative	✓			✓
14.	Economic growth, employment and poverty reduction: comparative analysis of Chile and Mexico (Puyana, 2011).	The link between growth, employment and poverty in Chile and Mexico and the role of PEP to stimulate	Qualitative	✓			✓

No.	Study title and year	Focus Area	Research Method	Thematic Dimension of the studies/Focus Area			
				JC*	PG/A/CS*	E*	MG*
		growth and drive aggregate demand					
15.	The effectiveness of the Expanded Public Works Programme on job creation: a look at a South African metropolitan municipality. Mubangizi and Mkhize (2013).	How the programme was conceptualised in terms of job creation as well as the extent to which projects participants have been able to obtain decent employment after they exited the programme.	Qualitative	✓		✓	
16.	A Brief Scanning on Performance of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Assam. Das, (2013).	Programme performance with regards to average duration in terms of the days of employment in each household; total percentage of households that have completed 100days of work in the MGNREGA Programme; and total percentage of expenditure in the Programme against the total funding provided to the Programme.	Qualitative	✓			✓
17.	Integrating Employment Creation and Skills Development: The Case of Expanded Public Works Programme in South Africa (Bokolo, 2013).	Public Works Programmes' contribution to job creation and skills development, particularly to youth and women	Qualitative	✓		✓	
18.	Short-term welfare effects of Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme. Hartwig (2013).	Contribution of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme to the welfare of the community in a short-term, particularly on food security, consumption and livestock investment in the short-term	Qualitative and Quantitative	✓			✓
19.	Public works programs in developing countries have the potential to reduce poverty (Zimmermann, 2014).	Effectiveness of PWP in developing countries (Asia Africa and Latin America) and implementation challenges	Qualitative	✓			
20.	The role and importance of public employment programmes: Hungary. Oláh (2014).	Contribution of PEPs to job creation and skills development	Quantitative	✓		✓	
21.	How can public works programmes create sustainable employment? (Gehrke and Hartwig, 2015).	The role of public works programmes in creating sustainable employment.	Qualitative	✓	✓	✓	

No.	Study title and year	Focus Area	Research Method	Thematic Dimension of the studies/Focus Area			
				JC*	PG/A/CS*	E*	MG*
22.	Somalia Food Security Cash Transfer: After Action Review. Austen (2015).	The strengths and weaknesses of the Somalia Food Security Cash Transfer	Qualitative	✓		✓	
23.	Public works programmes: a strategy for poverty alleviation: the gender dimension revisited in employment intensive investment programmes (EIIPs) in 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Tanzarn and Gutierrez (2015).	Gender analysis on PEP across the selected countries, how gender is mainstreamed in PEP as well the extent.	Qualitative	✓		✓	
24.	Impact assessment of MGNREGA: Study of Pauri Garhwal District of Uttarakhand, India (Negi et al., 2015).	The Programme impact on conservation of natural resource, including water and soil as well as how the assist in employment creation and improvement of rural livelihoods including the participation of women in the programme. This study focused in Pauri Garhwal District of Uttarakhand, India.	Qualitative	✓	✓	✓	
25.	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: A Catalyst for Rural Transformation (Desai et al., 2015).	How the lives of rural households has changed after the introduction of the programme.	Qualitative	✓	✓		
26.	Workfare programmes and their impact on the labour market: Effectiveness of <i>Construyendo Perú</i> . Escudero (2016)	Medium-term effects of the workfare programme <i>Construyendo Perú</i> to job creation and labour market.	Quantitative	✓		✓	
27.	Protecting people and the environment: lessons learnt from Brazil's Bolsa Verde, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, South Africa and 56 other experiences. Schwarzer, Van Panhuys and Diekmann, (2016).	Payments for environmental services (PES) systems in PEPs in 19 countries.	Qualitative	✓	✓	✓	
28.	Impact of South Africa's home community-based care on female caregivers' livelihoods and	How the programme promotes women empowerment as well as economic gains achieved	Qualitative and Quantitative	✓		✓	

No.	Study title and year	Focus Area	Research Method	Thematic Dimension of the studies/Focus Area			
				JC*	PG/A/CS*	E*	MG*
	empowerment (Wong, 2017).	by women through the Programme					
29.	The Impact of Training and Support Interventions on Small Businesses in the Expanded Public Works Programme—Pretoria Region. Dladla and Mutambara (2018).	The contribution of training intervention to small businesses with the EPWP.	Quantitative			✓	
30.	Why Public Employment Programmes are needed. Global Comparative Analysis of Public Employment Programmes: Strengths and limitations (Talbot et al., 2019).	The importance of PEPs and why are they needed. Similarities, differences, strengths and weaknesses of the 10 PEPs in the selected countries	Qualitative	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Adapted from Wong, 2017

*JC = Job Creation; PG/A/CS = Public Goods/Assets and Community Service; E = Empowerment including training; MG = Monetary Gains and financial benefits.

Table 4 above clearly indicates that even though some studies have multiple objectives, all those objectives fall within these four thematic areas defined and outlined above, which are: job creation; public goods, community assets or services; empowerment and training; and monetary gain or benefit.

Therefore, based on the above analysis, one can then conclude that the majority of studies conducted on PEPs are inward-looking and centred on internal effect paradigms of the PEPs to participants. If one defines what one terms as the inward-looking and internal effect paradigms of the PEPs studies, this refers to studies that are focusing on the “face-value” of the programme, which is the direct translation of the programme objectives, as articulated in the 2004 founding Logical Framework for EPWP Phase I (summarised in Table 5 below). As much as they may look at various angles of these objectives, it all boils down to the three fundamental objectives of the 2004 Logical Framework outlined above, and I have summarised these objectives as shown in Table 5 below.

These objectives are a mirror image of what most studies on the EPWP and PEPs in general have sought to assess and evaluate. Evidence presented in the above section clearly shows that the focus areas for many studies on public employment are job creation; delivery of public goods, assets and community service; empowerment, including training; and monetary gains or financial benefits. This is consistent with aims and priorities defined in the 2004 founding Logical Framework for EPWP Phase I, except that monetary or financial benefits were not explicitly laid out in the Framework, but assumed to be embedded in the job creation objective (i.e. when one gets employment, it is presumed that financial benefits in the form of wages will follow).

Table 5: EPWP 2004 founding logical framework objectives

Objective No.	Objective Name	Description
Objective 1	Job Creation	To alleviate unemployment for a minimum of one million people in 2009;
Objective 2	Public Goods/Assets and Community Service	To provide needed public goods and services labour-intensively at acceptable standards;
Objective 3	Empowerment	To increase the potential of programme participants to get sustainable employment through the provision of training and information related to local work opportunities including SMME development opportunities. Targeting of vulnerable groups such as youth and women.

Source: Adapted from EPWP 2004 Logical Framework (2004)

These PEPs and EPWP studies do not look at how the programme and the assets created contribute to service delivery and the livelihoods of communities where these projects are implemented. They do not show how the created assets provide value or benefit the targeted community and contribute to service delivery, if at all. This gap in the literature is further raised by Mitchel (2008), who recommended that “the impact of assets, services and training provided through EPWP should be examined” for one to get a sense of their contribution to the communities. Wong (2017) and Escudero (2018) supported this view by arguing that other aspects of the programmes’ impact on communities remains unknown, and they include how the infrastructure and social services impact the livelihoods of communities or the analysis of infrastructure usage to improve the lives of communities. This view was further supported by Del Ninno et al. (2009), who recommended that more research is required to better understand the contribution of PEPs on what they termed “the second round effects” of the assets and services created through PEPs for the community.

Furthermore, Gehrke and Hartwig (2015) observed that many reviews and assessments were made by various scholars on PWP implemented across developing countries. However, there is limited evidence of studies on the programmes’ impact. They argue that most of the studies conducted on PWP focuses on the primary effect of the programmes, such as jobs, consumption, savings and investment. The secondary effect of the programme, such as sustainable jobs after the programme and impact of the skills and training received by programme participants is very limited.

Similarly, McCord (2005) opines that the socio-economic impact and developmental value contributed by the assets created through PWP are commonly assumed instead of being empirically established. As such, these above arguments and recommendations clearly indicate and confirm that most PEP studies do not go beyond what I have referred to as “the face-value” contribution of the PEPs (i.e. job creation, income transfer, asset creation and service delivery).

As a result, this study aims to close this gap in the literature through what I have termed the *outward looking* and *external effect paradigms* of the PWP to service delivery and livelihoods of rural communities in particular. This investigation will then add the missing piece of the puzzle and complete the whole circle of the PEP assessment in the contribution to service delivery and livelihoods of rural communities. By addressing these three major questions:

- 1) How do the various PEPs contribute to the delivery of public services in rural areas?
- 2) In what way are the livelihoods of the beneficiaries or employees of the PEPs affected?

- 3) What are the implementation challenges of PEP programmes and how can these be improved?

3.1.5 PEP Implementation Limits and Challenges

Various studies have highlighted different challenges and limitations on the implementation of PEPs. Pavanello et al. (2016), Hartwig (2013), Lavers (2016), and Ayliffe (2015) indicated that one of the main challenges experienced in the implementation of PEPs is gender issues. Women's participation is still a key problem in many PEPs. The number of women compared to male counterparts is low in many PEPs. This, to a larger extent, is attributed to the design features of the programmes that do not accommodate or are not friendly to women. For example, one of the cited problems is that projects are implemented in local areas and do not cater for women who have babies to breastfeed, and no extra time allocated is allowed for women to carry out this important task for their children. As a result, women with small babies do not participate in the programme.

Hence, Devereux and Solomon (2006, citing Dejardin, 1996) note that the countries whose programmes have succeeded in drawing a significant number of women have put various measures in place to attract and accommodate women. For example, in Botswana's PWP, women participants were given an extra 35 minutes on top of their daily meal break for breastfeeding their children. The same was also observed in the Zambian rural roads project to accommodate women who were still breastfeeding. These are all the flexibilities being encouraged in the programmes to ensure women are not discriminated against and they equally benefit from the programme, as McCord (2005) adduces. Other challenges for the programme implementation are grouped into six categories and described in the following sections.

A. Programme Funding

Financing of PWPs is one of the limiting factors, particularly in African countries. As noted by Schwarzer et al. (2016), PEPs in Africa are mostly financed by donor agencies, while in other regions such as Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the programmes are funded by governments. For example, according to Austen (2015), working with the Government of Somalia, international aid agencies and donor organisations supported the county and implemented the CFW Programme. Key among the organisations that supported the programme were: the FAO, NRC, and USAID. However, the dependency on donor funding limits the impact of the programmes. As has been seen during tough economic times or political turmoil, donor funding often dries out. Foreign governments and their agencies focus on their domestic needs. As was the case again in Somalia, the ongoing civil war in 2009 resulted in food aid agencies withdrawing their support from the country in 2009 and 2010 due to the volatile political environment.

B. Programme Leadership, Coordination and Ownership

In the assessment of the Programme performance in the Province of North-West, Phillips et al. (2009) identified that the lack of political and senior management leadership is only one of the many reasons for the dismal achievements of the Programme in the Province. A clear distinction was made by Jamison and Castaneda (2020) between political and senior management leadership and political and

senior management interference in the Programme's implementation. The latter is referred to as a violation of procedures by means of seeking to bias the decision making, or putting undue pressure on civil servants to violate the laws and policies that guide the EPWP's implementation. Political and administrative leadership or proper political involvement includes giving guidance or direction informed by laws and policies on the implementation of the Programme in line with acceptable and legitimate procedures with sufficient transparency to boost public confidence in the actions and programmes. For example, to maintain consistency among all sectors in the process recruiting participants and eliminate unfair and biased practices, the EPWP introduced the recruitment standards to inform EPWP partners of their obligations for the hiring of EPWP participants.

Abedian and Standish (1986) raised weaknesses and unsuitable administrative arrangements in the coordination and management of the programmes as one of the causes why PWP failed. Lack of ownership and poor coordination, especially at the political and senior management levels, is one of the reasons causing PEPs to fail or not achieve the intended outcomes. This view was further affirmed by Heradien (2013, citing Kobokane, 2007), who found that the disengagement when it comes to the design, implementation and coordination of the Programme, mostly arose as a result of weak communication between role players, and these role players include national, provincial and local government.

C. Programme Mainstreaming and Integration

The unstructured and piecemeal approach is another limitation in the implementation of PEPs and reaching their outcomes. EPWP mainstreaming, according to McCord (2005), refers to ensuring that the EPWP principles are embedded in all developmental programmes. For the Programme to achieve its scale, a change of heart is required to ensure that it is not viewed in isolation but incorporated with other developmental initiatives. McCord (2005) and Abedian and Standish (1986) outlined the reasons for failure of PEPs as their being implemented in isolation and not forming part of a broader developmental policy thrust.

D. Programme Up-scaling

Another challenge noted by Abedian and Standish (1986) is that PWPs have seldom been scaled up in their implementation. This means the programmes are unable to reach a higher number of unemployed and poor people. The scaling up of the programmes is attributed to various factors. They include lack of funding, poor leadership at both political and administrative levels, as well as programme design. These are the key factors to be considered in order to expand the program's scope. To ensure that it reaches the number of unemployed people. Most importantly, the scale and predictability of employment opportunities are critical to the community, as it provides certainty that in the next six to 12 months, one will still be in employment. This allows the beneficiaries of the programme to be able to commit their financial resources to longer-term obligations to improve their livelihoods, as it has been noted by Hartwig (2013) in Rwanda's VUP, showing that income consistency and predictability contributed to the improvement in consumption patterns and livestock.

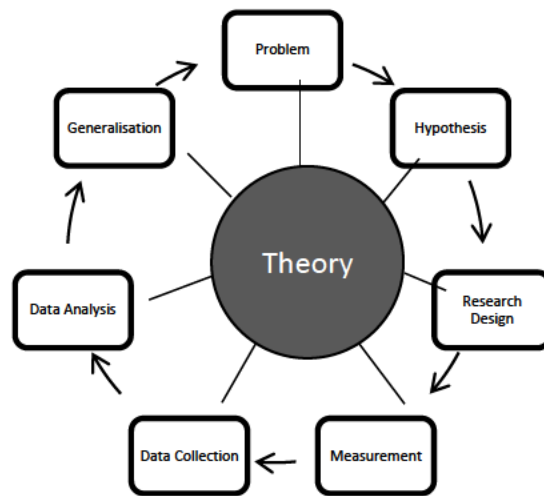
E. Lack of Innovation in Programme Implementation

Times have changed and new technologies, innovations, and other new ways of doing things have been introduced. Adaptation of PEPs to these new technologies becomes an important factor in driving their implementation. Abedian and Standish (1986) cited a lack of technical planning, incompetence and unsuitable technology as one of the failures of PWPs. This cannot be over-emphasised during the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” (4IR). PEPs should be adapted to respond to the needs of the 4IR. Opportunities presented by the 4IR in terms of PEPs should be identified and harnessed. Nicva (2020) noted that the 4IR is generating a demand for new employment types, and as much as other types of jobs are eliminated, new jobs are being greeted. In fact, it is estimated that more than 65% of children enrolling at primary school today, in 15 years from now, will end up working in entirely new and different jobs that do not exist today. Therefore, the lack innovation in PEPs poses a challenge in the programme implementation. PEPs must move with the times.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

In defining theory, Somekh and Lewin (2011) refer to it as a combination of concepts that are incorporated around a principal theme to form a theoretical framework, which in turn is used to provide an explanation and reasons for a particular phenomenon, i.e. how a phenomenon came about, why it came about etc. Supporting this view, Abend (2008) states that the theoretical framework is a critical structure in research work that is used to hold or act as a foundation to support a theory for a particular research study being undertaken. This means any research study is premised or anchored in a particular theoretical framework. As Swanso (2013) noted, theory defines a particular realm of knowledge and describes the way that knowledge works. What becomes clear in these explanations of theory is that a theory is a blueprint for a study informed by assumptions, or it constitutes a set of assumptions and principles used to describe a particular phenomenon or analyse and predict its nature or its features.

By looking at the main stages of the research process in a circular flow below (Figure 6) outlined by Nachmias and Nachmias (2004), we can see that theory is the central point in the circular flow, which all stages of the research process are informed by and reflect on. For example, research design is informed by the theoretical framework adopted by the study, so as the measurement, data collection, etc. This is a clear indication of the role of the theory as the foundation and a pillar that a research project hinges on, as Grant and Osanloo (2014) adduce that the theoretical framework is one of the vital aspects of the research process. All the research stages are affected by theory, and at the same time, all the stages of research also affect the theory, according to Nachmias and Nachmias (2004). These authors further argue that theories aid in describing as well as forecasting a phenomena of a particular interest to the researcher. As a result, a researcher will be able to make informed decisions based on the information at hand. The diagram below outlines the interconnectedness between the research stages and the theory as the foundation for the study.



Source: Nachmias and Nachmias (2004)

Figure 6: The main stages of the research process

Nachmias and Nachmias (2004) argue that a credible theory is a foundation for reliable knowledge. These authors alluded that social scientists, however, do not agree on a single definition of theory because in social science, various frameworks serve different objectives. As a result, they don't agree on a solitary definition of a theoretical framework. But Rogers (2014), Van Belle, Marchal, Dubourg and Kegels (2010), Robson (2002), Nachmias and Nachmias (2004), and Sharpe (2011) seem to agree that theory strives to establish necessary dimensions by which problems can be well understood, better dealt with, and workable solutions proffered. In essence, theory directs workable practice. To increase our understanding, theory intends to establish the reasons why and how a phenomenon arises. Theory seeks to understand how and why things become successful and effective or not. Using a theory becomes an important element in developing ideas and deepening the understanding of the programme to provide answers systematically to phenomena being investigated. As such, a theoretical framework gives a key format to examine interlinked ideas formed to give account to a phenomenon (Rogers, 2014).

Interestingly, not all scholars seem to agree on the role of theory and theoretical frameworks in research projects and evaluation studies. The main objective of this study is to assess the contribution of PEPs to service delivery and sustainable livelihoods of rural communities. Donaldson and Lipsey (2006), citing Scriven (1998, 2004a, 2004b), cite that the research does not need to follow any theory of some sort as a framework for evaluation. They claim that one can still conduct a decent programme evaluation regardless of any programme theory or evaluation framework, and they also attest that there is a widespread general misconception among programme evaluators that one needs to have either a programme theory as a framework of evaluation or make use of a logical model. This view is further supported by Robson (2002), citing Thomas (1997), who advocated the desertion of all theories due to their suppressing consequences in real terms. However, this argument does not recognise the fundamental principle for theory in research as raised by Grant and Osanloo (2014:74), that "the theoretical framework is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study. It serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions. The theoretical framework provides a grounding base, or an anchor, for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis".

The theoretical framework brings everything together in a logical manner. It acts as an architectural

design in a house building project, showing the internal and external structure of a building. This means a research project without a theoretical framework is equivalent to a building without an architectural design plan.

As a result, this research is aligned with the school of thought that upholds the use of theory as a foundation to conduct such investigations. It further acknowledges the key principles of theoretical frameworks as articulated by Grant and Osanloo (2014) and Nachmias and Nachmias (2004) above. This study reiterates the views of Pawson (2003: 471), wherein he avers that that social programmes are underlined by some forms of theories.

To identify the most suitable theoretical framework for the study, one needs to review the existing relevant theoretical frameworks in line with this study. There are a number of theories that one considers to be relevant to this study. For example, Programme Theory Evaluation (PTE), according to Rogers (2014) and Van Belle et al. (2010), provides guidance on how to carry out evaluations, and it outlines important factors to be considered in the programme implementation and how they are linked to one another. PTE broadly involves various inherent sets of assumptions which drive selection of an intervention and show how the intervention is designed to epitomise the hypothesis being examined for additional refinement where necessary. Furthermore, programme theories can also capture “if-then” statements.

Heradien (2013) and Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner, and Hacsí (2000) argue that PTE was developed mainly by evaluators. Their study traces the development of PTE as far back as the 1950s in the works of Weiss (1972), Bennett (1975), and Suchman (1967). PTE can be summarised in a diagram that outlines a casual chain as shown in Figure 8 below. Rogers et al. (2000) and Wilder Research (2009) indicate that in developing a sound PTE, evaluators ought to use a series of boxes categorised as input, process, output and outcome, with arrows linking them. PTE then assists one to measure whether or not the programme was able to achieve the intended outcomes or impact. Each evaluator designs their PTE in line with these principles, research design, and the type of data to be collected, which influence the way each researcher develops their PTE.

Wilder Research (2009) holds that a good programme theory also shows that change in a programme does not just happen, but takes place in stages. The underlying assumption for this argument is that programme implementation goes through various stages, as outlined in the Project Management Body of Knowledge principles.

Donaldson and Lipsey (2006) also hold the same view on PTE. These authors added that PTE provides a good set of procedures, instructions, and injunctions, including frameworks that guide and indicate what a noble or appropriate evaluation is as well as how it should be conducted.

Another theory that was also considered in this study which still forms part of the evaluation is Theory of Change (TOC), defined by Rogers (2014) as a framework that outlines how programme actions are known to provide strings of outcomes, which in turn contributes to the attainment of the ultimate envisioned impact. This framework can be used for any type of programme and at any level, according to Rogers (2014). The Theory of Change (2019) website notes that it is difficult to accurately trace when TOC started to be used; however, a clue of its origin can be found in the substantial body of literature in both the theoretical and applied development fields in evaluation.

The renowned contributors and theorists in this area include Chen, who has written a lot on evaluation theory; Rossi, who has also been preoccupied with the application of evaluation theories in

development for many years as well as Patton and Weiss. These authors concur that the usage of the TOC framework dates back to the late 1950s in the work of Kirkpatrick (1998), with his model referred to as the “Four Levels of Learning Evaluation Model” and Stufflebeam’s (2004) Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) model that traces how a programme is formulated, taking into account the context and ingredients (inputs), how are these ingredients are transformed (process), and the final result (product), as part of the well-known logical model framework. It is argued that TOC provides a clear guideline on complex areas that may either include economic considerations, social considerations or institutional processes. It gives various avenues that might contribute to change, whether related to the programme or not. As a result, the TOC model looks like a spider web diagram with many shapes and angles.

One of the critiques of TOC in this form, according to Nachmias and Nachmias (2004), is that it is difficult to follow the process because of the complex diagrams. This model becomes more sophisticated and confusing. Furthermore, the theory based-evaluation has been criticised by theory sceptics, such as Stufflebeam (2004:43), who adduces that “the now fashionable advocacy of theory-based evaluation” makes little sense because it “assumes that the complex of variables and interactions involved in running a project in the complicated, sometimes chaotic conditions of the real world can be worked out and used a prior determined pertinent evaluation questions and variables”. What this criticism fails to appreciate in programme evaluation is the structure that Nachmias and Nachmias (2004) regarded as an “anchor” for the literature and evaluation to support the rationale for the investigation.

In line with the key objectives of the study to examine the role of PEPs and their contribution to service delivery and sustainable livelihoods in rural communities, PTE is chosen as the most suitable theoretical framework for this study. Conceptually, PEPs in South Africa have clear pre-determined goals and objectives, i.e. to provide work opportunities and income support to participants, thereby contributing to development (EPWP, 2017a). As Donaldson (2003:114) maintains that PTE is regarded as “a common understanding of how a program is presumed to solve the social problem(s)”. Therefore, to evaluate PEPs and their objective, one needs a framework that will clearly show whether or not the Programme achieved its objectives. But not only the predetermined objectives, however this theoretical framework and the model will also look at the impact the programme had on the community livelihoods and service delivery. This will be possible because the PTE systematically and sequentially uses a clearly defined approach in its process, i.e. inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes in programme evaluation, to see whether or not the programme achieved its objectives. This is depicted in Figure 7 below, which further outlines how PTE will be very useful for this evaluation.

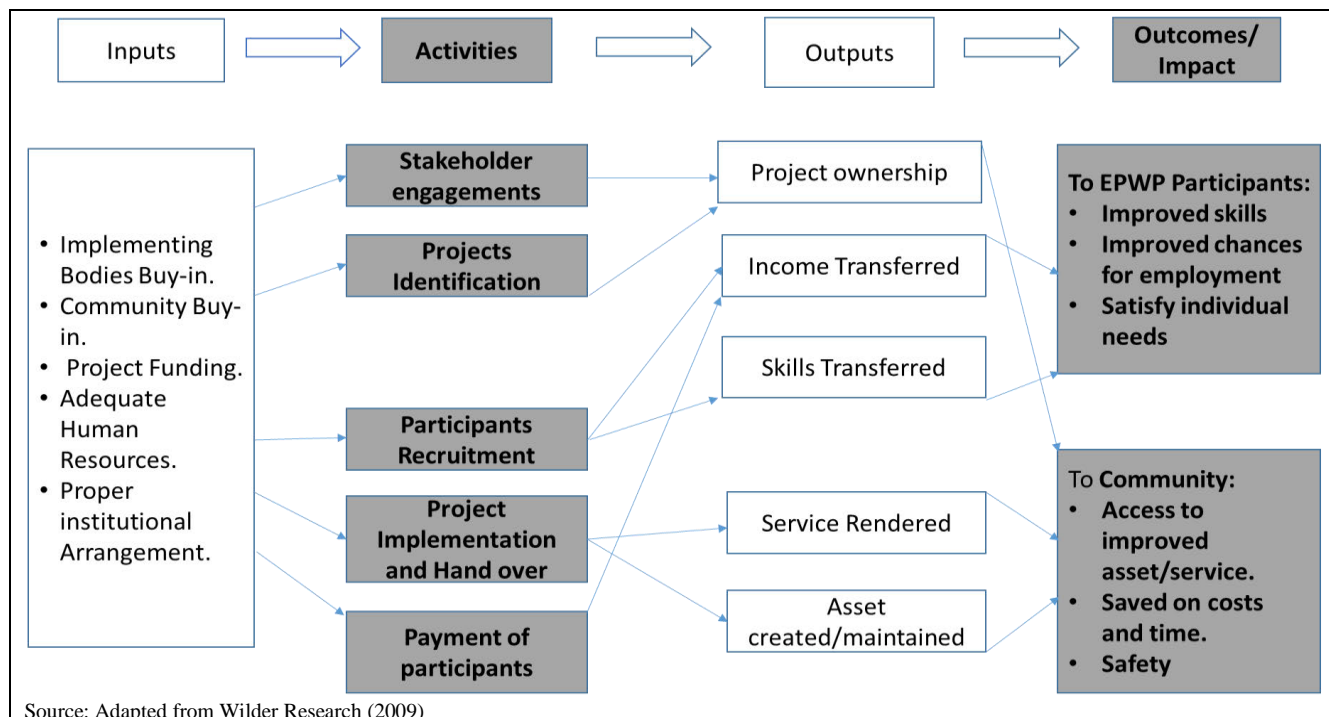


Figure 7: Program Theory Evaluation – A logical model for EPWP assessment

According to Rogers et al. (2000), PTE contains a clear theory or model of how the programme gives rise to the intended or observed outcomes. Using the principles of PTE, the EPWP logical model has been developed, as shown above, to demonstrate how the EPWP is implemented, its impact, and outcomes achieved.

The first part of the model, as outlined in the PTE, is the input, and these are all the key ingredients required in the programme implementation. They become important when one evaluates where the programme achieved its outcomes or not. Inputs include:

- 1) **Programme buy-in by implementing bodies** – This means organisations that intend to implement the programme must first show their commitment or buy-in to the programme. This is done through various means, such as signing agreements with the DPWI or developing policy to guide programme implementation.
- 2) **Programme funding** – Availing funding is a critical ingredient for programme implementation. No programme can be implemented without funding.
- 3) **Human resources** – The management and coordination of the programme require human resources. As such, human resources are another key ingredient to the programme implementation.
- 4) **Institutional arrangements** – These are structures that are established internally and externally of the organisation to assist in coordination and reporting of the programme.

The second part of the model is activities. This refers to all the actions that take place in the actual implementation of the programme. Activities include:

- 1) **Stakeholder engagement** – Before any programme is implemented, stakeholder engagement becomes critical. In this case, stakeholders include the community and the structures that exist in the community, such as traditional leaders.
- 2) **Project identification** – With the support of the community and based on their needs, the project is identified.
- 3) **Recruitment of participants** – This refers to employment of project workers for the community where the project is implemented in line with the agreed guidelines and principles.
- 4) **Project implementation and hand-over** – This is the actual project implementation once all the processes have been completed and there is a handing over to the community.
- 5) **Payment of participants** – Once all project workers have completed their tasks or activities, they then receive payment in the form of wages for their labour.

The third part of the model is the output. Again, in line with the PTE, programme output refers to the actual product, asset, or service rendered, produced or provided by the programme or through the activities undertaken in the programme. Each activity in this model has associated output. The outputs include:

- 1) **Project ownership** – The process of stakeholder engagement is to ensure that the community owns the project. Once the community owns the project, they protect it and ensure that it is smoothly implemented without hindrances.
- 2) **Income transfer** – The output of recruitment of labourers is the transfer of income in the form of wages.
- 3) **Skills transfer** – The second output in the recruitment of labour is skills transfer, which is workers in the project receiving training. Whether on the job, accredited or non-accredited training, once they exit the project, they should exit with a particular set of skills.
- 4) **Service rendered and assets maintained or created** – At the end of any project, the result or final product would be the creation of an asset, maintenance of the asset or rendering of the service. These are the three main outputs of the programme.

The last part of this model is outcome or impact. This refers to the contribution of the programme to the community and the workers of the project. Once the asset has been created or maintained, this is about how it contributes to the community and service delivery activities. Another part of the impact or outcome is for the actual workers of the programme. Besides attaining certain sets of skills and income, how did participation in the programme impact their lives and livelihoods? The impact is beyond what is discussed above as the inward-looking and internal effect of the programme's contribution to an individual but the external effect and outward-looking of the programme. This looks beyond just creating work opportunity, receiving income, and the simple building of roads and other infrastructure to how those roads and other infrastructure impact the community, and how they contribute to community livelihoods and service delivery. This is noted by Gehrke and Hartwig (2015) as “double-dividends” of the programme to the community.

The highlighted parts (grey blocks) of this model (as shown in Figure 7) speak directly to the issues that have surfaced from the literature on the implementation of PEPs. As noted in the studies by McCord (2005), Devereux and Solomon (2006), and Mitchel (2008), they emphasised that to achieve the intended outcome of job creation and reducing unemployment, project identification should be large in scale to match the rate of unemployment. Furthermore, Zimmermann (2014) cautioned that the payment of participants should not be very low, as it defeats the very purpose of the programme. Instead, a balance in terms of wage rate must be created. When one looks at the right-hand part of this model, i.e. Outcomes/impact as explained above, it links directly to the objectives of this study, and it will assist in:

- Understanding the impact of the assets created through EPWP on service delivery and the livelihoods of communities.
- Establish the contribution of the programme to individual participants.
- Assess the programme's implementation challenges and how they can be addressed.

Heradien (2013), citing Rodgers (1983:5), affirms that PTE entails a clear theory or model showing how the programme gives rise to the intended or observed outcomes. This model will, therefore, assist in the assessment of the EPWP and its contribution to rural livelihoods and service delivery. Others who support the use of the PTE model argue that it provides a good set of procedures, instructions, and injunctions, including frameworks that guide and indicate what an appropriate evaluation is, as well as how it should be conducted (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Wilder Research, 2009; Rogers, 2014). Hence, it has been chosen as the most appropriate theoretical framework for this study to guide in answering these questions:

- How do the various PEPs contribute to the delivery of public services in rural areas?
- In what way are the livelihoods of the beneficiaries or employees of PEPs affected?
- What are the implementation challenges for PEPs and how can these be addressed?

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed literature review on the assessment of PEPs. It has compared and contrasted different studies conducted on PEPs, their focus areas, methodologies used, and their findings. It has further demonstrated the existing gap in the literature when it comes to the assessment and evaluation of PEPs, in that the focus of most studies is on the summative value of the programme, best regarded as inward-looking and cantered on internal effect paradigms, which includes job creation; public goods, community assets or services; empowerment and training; and monetary gain or benefits. These types of assessments then leave out the outcomes and programme impact, which one refers to as outward looking and external effect paradigms assessment and evaluation of PEPs. They look at programme impact on the community livelihoods and service delivery.

Challenges to programme implementation and limits were also discussed in this chapter. Lastly, as a building block and the foundation for this study, the theoretical framework was discussed, which culminated in Programme Theory Evaluation (PTE) being selected as the most appropriate theoretical framework for this study. The next chapter explores the concept of sustainable livelihoods and their origins, and further looks at public service delivery, guiding policies, frameworks and prescripts.

CHAPTER 4

Sustainable Livelihoods, Public Service Delivery and Rurality in South Africa: Literature Review

4.0 Introduction

To assess the contribution of PEPs to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa, it is important for one to first understand these concepts, their underlying principles, and the frameworks which characterise them. This chapter is comprised of four main sections. The opening segment examines the concept of sustainable livelihoods and its origins, followed by a detailed review of public service delivery, its guiding policies, frameworks and its prescripts within South African context. Against this backdrop, the final section will explore the concept of rurality again within the South African context as the premise for this study.

4.1 Sustainable Livelihoods

According to Sati and Vangchhia (2016:21) the “concept of sustainable livelihoods was first brought up by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development in 1983”. This Commission had a mandate to, among other things, relook at the critical matters of environment and development with a view to developing innovative, tangible and realistic actions to address them. Furthermore, the Commission aimed to bring together socio-economic and environmental considerations in a concise, coordinated and consistent manner in policy discussion and debate structures. In adding to the introduction and coining of the sustainable livelihoods concept, Serrat (2017) notes that after the Brundtland Commission introduced this concept, the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 expanded on it in line with the context of Agenda 21 (UN, 2020). Agenda 21 is an all-inclusive plan of action that was adopted by the global, national and local institutions and structures of the UN system, governments and major groups in all facets of life where humans impact on the environment. In that, the conference encouraged that attaining sustainable livelihoods should be considered a broader objective of alleviating poverty and further backed that sustainable livelihoods must also be considered as “A factor that brings together policies to address development, sustainable resource management and poverty alleviation” (UN, 2020:33).

Having provided the historical background of this concept, it is now appropriate to attempt its definition. Various scholars worldwide have defined the concept sustainable livelihoods and continued to modify this definition. Sati and Vangchhia (2016, citing Chambers and Conway, 1992a, 1992b) refer to sustainable livelihoods as:

the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihoods for the next generation and which contributes net benefit to other livelihoods at local and global levels and in the short and long term.

Mubangizi (2020:1) defines the “stress and shocks” referred to by Sati and Vangchhia (2016) as “unanticipated phenomena that interrupt an otherwise steady livelihood, one with a clear set of

livelihoods' activities functioning within an ideal institutional, policy and legislative framework to create favourite livelihoods outcomes". In this case, shocks could take any form, including environmental disaster, such as droughts or floods; political instability and turmoil; financial crises; or health crises such as diseases. With the above definition, livelihoods are sustainable if it is able to cope with such stress and shocks.

Furthermore, in defining a sustainable livelihood, Scoones (2009:64) referred to it as:

The livelihoods that contains the capabilities, assets (includes both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. In addition, a livelihoods is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from the stresses and shocks maintain or enhance its capabilities while not undermining the natural resource base.

These are not the only definitions for this concept. But what becomes clear is that both emphasise that livelihoods include "capabilities and assets". The capabilities are what Tonon (2018) refers to as knowledge and the ability to perform any task or do anything. While assets within the context of sustainable livelihoods, according to Serrat (2017), refer to anything of value, including resources to which a particular household or individual has uninterrupted access. The assets comprise human capital, natural capital, financial capital and physical capital. The said assets include both material and social resources.

While conducting a study in China's Manjiang River basin on options and strategies of sustainable livelihoods, Sati (2014) considered sustainable livelihoods as "A strategy aim to improve the conditions and well-being of the community, household or individual, decrease their vulnerability, increase food security and enhance the use of natural resources base". The author averse that sustainable livelihoods largely depend on "the availability of assets/livelihoods capital, which are: human capital, natural capital, financial capital and physical capital" (ibid).

That is why at the centre of this study, there is sustainable livelihoods. PEPs are best known for providing employment opportunities, creation of assets and delivery of services. However, little attempt, as shown in the literature review, has been made by scholars thus far to assess and understand the contribution of PEPs to sustainable livelihoods. As can be seen in the above definitions, particularly on the types and different assets or livelihoods capital, most studies have been focusing on the two main types of capital, i.e. financial capital and physical capital. As a result, less is known or shown on the other capital forms in terms of the general well-being of the community, household or individual. Sati (2014) claims that increasing the general well-being of a community, household or individual is not only based on financial capital. It is dependent on various factors, articulated by Tonon (2018) as the five livelihood capitals.

Furthermore, Elasha et al. (2005) defined "livelihoods" as all forms of actions, privileges and possessions, including assets that people use to make a living. In this taxonomy, assets are not defined by only looking into their natural or biological features, such as water and land. Assets include social components and aspects, such as family, social networks, participation, and human capital, including knowledge and talents. Physical assets also form part of the broader definition of assets, such as infrastructure, schools, bridges, roads, etc. Farrington et al. (1999) and Morse and McNamara (2013)

argue that for a livelihood to be sustainable, it requires characteristics that ensure it is able to deal with the stresses and shockwaves brought by the environment, as well as the ability to bounce back from them. At the same time, it should be able to uphold or increase its ability to resist those shocks in future without damaging the natural resources.

The question that arises next is then: how does one measure or ascertain the achievements of sustainable livelihoods by a community, household or individual from a particular programme? Tonon (2018), citing Farrington et al. (1999), looked at the White Paper on International Development of 1997 of the UK government that devoted the government to meeting the target of decreasing the number of people living in dire poverty by half in 2015, as part of the International Development Trust commitment. In order to achieve this objective, certain measures were put in place, including a wider consultation of relevant parties by the Department for International Development to appreciate the kind and magnitude of poverty better and to identify what interventions could be put in place to address it. As a result of those discussions with stakeholders and parties, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (see Figure 8) was developed. This is an important tool that was conceptualised to assist in analysing and broadening the understanding of livelihoods in relation to poverty. Adopting the sustainable livelihoods method, poor people's livelihoods and objectives in reducing poverty become crucial points in any development plan.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework then became a widely used framework in the community development field, according to Serrat (2017), mainly to assist in organising the factors that limit or improve livelihood prospects of the poor and vulnerable, as it outlines how these factors are linked to one another. A fundamental point in this framework is the acknowledgement that not all households have the same access to livelihoods assets. These assets differ from household to household. With unequal access to livelihoods assets, households are often faced with the decision to make choices and trade-offs on those assets.

Another important influencer for the poor and vulnerable to access livelihoods assets, as depicted in Figure 8 below, is the "Transforming Structures and Processes". These include all levels of government as well as the private sector. In other words, policies, laws, culture, institutions as well as processes that have been put in place by government and/or the private sector have an impact on the livelihoods assets. This is then followed by livelihoods strategies which are critical in achieving the livelihoods outcomes. PEPs are also considered a strategy to achieve the livelihoods outcomes. In the case of the EPWP, this includes access to income as a financial asset and increased well-being, as noted by Sati (2014) above, includes a variety of factors such as the decreased vulnerability of poor households, increased food security, and enhanced use of natural resources base and other non-tangible benefits.

With regard to this study in particular, the framework, as depicted in Figure 8 below, draws our attention to transforming structures and processes, which relate to institutions, policies and laws as well as the nature of processes they engage while implementing pre-designed state policies. It is in this regard that the study will explore the role of the PEP as a policy instrument to deliver services to communities and achieve desired livelihoods outcomes for programme participants and their communities, such as increased income as well as their well-being and food security as the framework outlines.

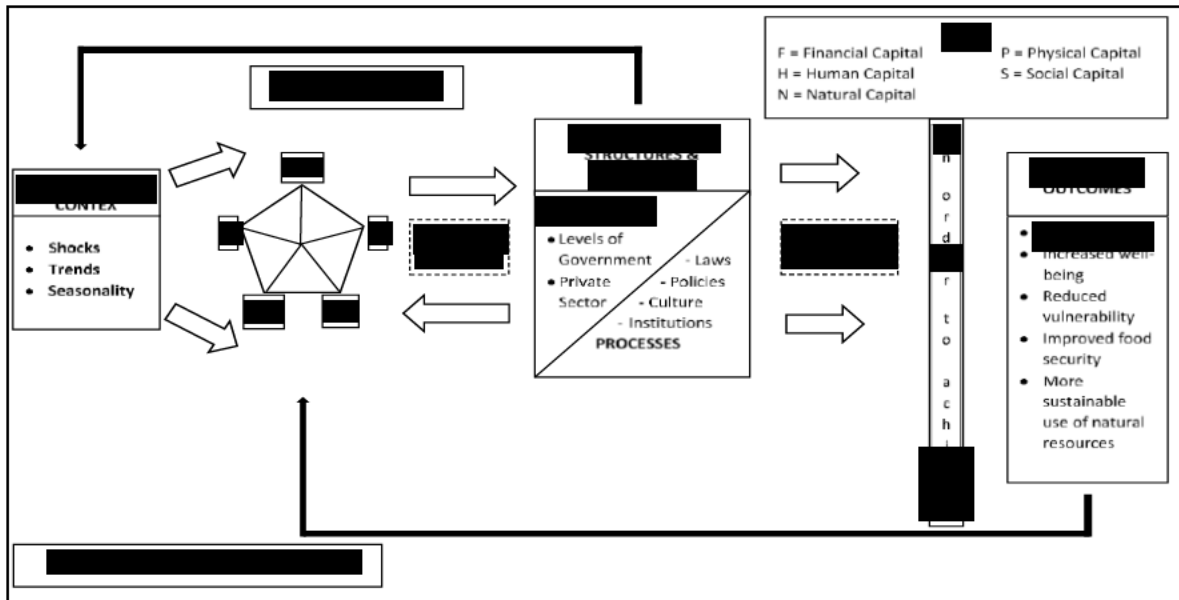


Figure 8: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Mubangizi (2020) succinctly summarised the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, saying that it provides a critical lens through which one examines “fragility and sustainability of livelihoods”. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework identified a set of livelihoods capitals that are critical for livelihoods activities that create ultimate livelihoods outcomes. But noting that for this to occur, it requires structures and procedures that are efficient and effective and also function within the optimum policy and legal framework.

Bringing the EPWP closer to the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, the transforming structures look across all the three spheres of government in the implementation of the programmes, as well as the part played by the private sector. In EPWP, private sector plays a vital role in training and development of skills of the youth. The Independent Development Trust (IDT) and Vodacom Youth Training Programme partnered with government to train youths over a period of three years in Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and entrepreneurship skills to equip them in entering the mainstream economy and sustain their livelihoods. This is an example where the private sector partnered with government. Furthermore, this programme provided schools in rural areas with basic ICT equipment, including telephone lines, Internet connection, fax machines, and printers. On 9 November 2015, the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mr Jeremy Cronin, officiated the graduation ceremony of 190 young people who participated in the programme (Government of South Africa, 2020).

The NGOs in the EPWP NSS also play a critical role in the implementation of the Programme, as explained in section 2.3.3 above. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework emphasises the role of the private and non-government sectors as part of the transforming structure and processes of the framework.

When it comes to “processes” as another important component of the transforming structure of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, one could refer to the existing policies and laws governing the programme's implementation. Key among those are the:

- Ministerial Determination 4: Expanded Public Works Programme gazetted by the Department of Labour (DoL) on 4 May 2012 created employment conditions for participants working in the EPWP. This covers their terms of work, hours of work and wage rate.
- National Minimum Wage Act No. 9 of 2018 (NMW Act). This Act, among other things, regulates the country's minimum wage; establishes the Commission which regulates the NMW as well as its annual review/adjustment. The employers of the EPWP workers are obliged to comply with this Act.

Other laws relevant to the EPWP which one regards as forming part of the “processes” in the transforming structure element of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework include the BCEA of 1997, Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) No. 85 of 1993, Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) No. 130 of 1993, and Unemployment Insurance Act No. 4 of 2002, as amended on 28 December 2018.

These transforming structures (government, private sector, laws and policies) influence access to five livelihoods assets (human capital, natural capital, financial capital, social capital and physical capital) as depicted in Figure 8 above. Government and its policies have a direct influence in the acquisition of human, natural, and physical capital. The private sector, by the same token, has both a direct and indirect influence in one accessing all the livelihoods capital. For example, the private sector creates employment and people receive income; it also provides financial facilities through banks.

The attainment of favourable livelihoods outcomes means to overcome the “stress and shocks” referred to above by Mubangizi (2020:1), it requires a combination of a distinct collection of livelihood activities operating inside a proper institutional, governmental, and legal framework to create favourite livelihoods outcomes. In the context of the EPWP, the livelihoods activities include job creation, asset creation, service delivery, and public investment. The expected and desirable outcome from these livelihoods activities includes better income, better health, less vulnerability, better food security, and more environmentally friendly use of natural resources. These are the outcomes the study also aimed to investigate, i.e. how do PEPs contribute to the livelihoods outcomes in rural communities while at the same time enabling the state to deliver public services? PEPs thus have a dual outcome – they contribute to livelihoods through their job creation thrust, and they contribute to the delivery of public services by creating public goods and assets. What follows is a discussion on public service delivery and the role of PEPs in this regard.

4.2 Public Service Delivery

Osah and Pade-Khene (2020:12) define public service delivery as a system by government “through which public services and community assets are provided to the general public by municipalities, provincial or national government”. These services and public assets consist of public schools, health services and infrastructure, policing, public education, roads, transport infrastructure and service and

waste disposal. Reddy (2016:23) reiterates that service delivery “globally denotes the provision of basic public goods and services, most notably housing, water and sanitation, land, electricity and infrastructure which communities relied upon” for their day-to-day needs. In South Africa, public service delivery mechanism has been regarded as an important intervention by the state to reduce inequality in South Africa (Tonon, 2018).

In addressing the persistent problems of inequality, joblessness and poverty, the South African Government puts public service delivery as its apex priority. This commitment emanates from the historical background in which the country’s the majority were denied some basic services due to Apartheid Laws. For example, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act No. 21 of 1923 and the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 regulated the presence and occupancy of Africans in urban areas. This Act provided for demarcation and establishment of African residences in the peripheries of the White urban settlements and business areas. It also restrained the mobility of non-Whites, in particular Blacks from the countryside into the larger cities, towns as well as other Whites-only areas (South African History, 2020). The segregation of people by race opened a huge inequality gap in the South African society, where the White minority was well favoured by the government system and received the best government service as compared to the Black majority. Currently, South Africa, according to Sulla and Zikhali (2018) and the World Bank (2019), ranks among the most unequal societies in the world. This inequality level, to a larger extent, is attributed to discrimination of the majority of the population under the apartheid policies and legislation of the previous government.

However, besides the unique circumstance of the past injustices in South Africa, which require redress, the government, in general, as part of its responsibility, has an important role to play in the delivery of public goods and services. According to Crous (2017), service delivery is the primary task for any government to its people. The electorates during elections choose their preferred candidates to represent them in parliament and government, safeguard their needs and ensure that the services and public goods that they need are supplied. The residents of any country, by law expect different forms of services and public goods from their government. Contrary to the general perceptions that the services are free, the country inhabitants directly or indirectly pay for those goods and services provided by the state in the form of taxes or other direct payments. Riekert (2001) and Crous (2002) define service delivery as a way of bringing public goods and service by the state or state organs to the citizens as per the provisions of either the constitution or as committed by the governing party to the electorates.

The 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development in South Africa describes service delivery as a form of meeting the primary needs of the community. As such, service delivery became one of the key priorities of the four government programmes outlined in the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) Programme: 1) meeting basic needs; 2) urban and rural development; 3) democratisation and institutional reform; and 4) economic restructuring (Government of South Africa, 1994). All those programmes committed the South African government to prioritise the delivery of services in different areas across the country to meet the primary needs of all the citizens. The government is implementing various policies and programmes to deliver services to citizens, and PEPs are part of the service delivery mechanisms implemented by the Government of South Africa. They significantly contribute to physical assets like roads, bridges, schools, buildings of clinics, etc., which are generally the foundation of delivering public services. What follows is a discussion on

legislative frameworks and policies governing the delivery of public services and assets. As mentioned in Chapter 1, post-1994, the GNU introduced the NPWP to address the challenges of unemployment and provide services especially to areas that were neglected by the apartheid government, forming part of the Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (McCord, 2005; Thwala, 2008). These policies and legislation are the premise for public service delivery in the country.

4.2.1 Legislative Frameworks Governing Service Delivery in South Africa

There is a rise in the demand for service delivery to citizens in South Africa. Some of these demands are marked by violent protests, which have become an ongoing occurrence in many South African townships and rural areas. Bohler-Muller et al. (2016) noted that the deficiency of public service delivery in most parts of the country, particularly in housing, water and sanitation, roads and other public infrastructure, has resulted in violent clashes between the police and communities. Citizens are angry with the lack of service delivery by the state.

In spite of the hardships that the citizens experience on a daily basis due to lack of proper service delivery, they are fully aware and informed of their rights to fair and just service delivery. Public service delivery in South Africa is premised on key policies, legislations and frameworks, they include:

1) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996

In South Africa, as part of the founding provisions, "the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic" (Government of South Africa, 1996:6). Chapter 2 of the Constitution provides for the Bill of Rights, referred to in the Constitution as "a cornerstone of South African democracy". The Bill of Rights protects the rights of all the citizens in the Country and asserts "democratic values, human dignity, equality and freedom". For example, in terms of public service delivery, Section 27(2) of the Constitution provides that:

"The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to have access to: (a) healthcare service; (b) sufficient food, water; and (c) social security" (Government of South Africa, 1996).

In other words, the state has a constitutional obligation to deliver healthcare services, food and social security to the citizens. Similarly, on the issue of education, the Constitution provides for a right to "a basic education, including adult basic education and further education and training". On the issue of housing, the Constitution in Section 26 also provides for the similar right, i.e. right to have access to adequate housing.

The NPC (2012b) asserts that all these rights are enshrined in the Constitution and the state is mandated "to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of these rights". Public service delivery is a constitutional obligation that the South African government have to its citizens. This legislative framework

is critical to this study as it clearly demonstrates the constitutional expectations and obligation of the state in the provision of basic services to the citizens.

2) The National Development Plan (NDP)

The Government of South Africa in 2010 established the NPC (2012b) to craft the country's long-term vision and strategic plan and to mobilise the nation to rally around a shared set of goals and priorities in order to drive the Country's development over the longer term. The works of the NPC culminated in two major milestones. One of those was the drafting of the Country's Diagnostic Report released in June 2011, which outlined nine challenges that affect the development of South Africa. The other milestone was the development of the National Development Plan (NDP), the country's socio-economic blueprint aimed to address the nine challenges identified by the Diagnostic Report over a longer term. The following are the challenges that the NDP aimed to address by 2030:

- Few people have jobs that provide sufficient income;
- Black students receive poor-quality education at public schools;
- The infrastructure is inefficiently situated, insufficient, and poorly maintained;
- Geographical disparities hinder shared prosperity;
- The economy uses excessive amounts of resources in an unsustainable manner;
- The public health service is unable to ensure quality and meet demand;
- Public services vary widely and are frequently of low quality;
- Corruption is widespread; and
- South Africa's society is still fragmented.

As it can be seen in these key priority areas of the NDP, addressing poor infrastructure, provision of quality public health, public service and quality schooling are among the key that the NDP aimed to respond to in order to improve public service delivery, attack the plight of poverty and exclusion caused by the apartheid system. Chapter 4, 8, 9 and 10 of the NDP emphasise economic infrastructure, human settlements, improving education and training, and promoting health, respectively. The improvement of economic infrastructure includes the provision of water infrastructure to the community, which is the constitutional responsibility in terms of Section 27(2) of the state to provide to citizens. This is also the case with education, housing, health and other basic services.

3) Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000

Municipalities in the country are known to be at the coalface of service delivery. Section 152(b) of the South African Constitution "puts municipalities at the centre of service delivery". It states that "local government to ensure the provision of services to communities in a fair and sustainable manner". For a municipality to discharge its function and duties in terms of the delivery of services to communities, the principal legislation is the Municipal Systems Act which "provides for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities, and ensure universal access to essential services".

The Act “acknowledges that system of local government under apartheid failed dismally to meet the basic needs of the majority of South Africans”. This is evident considering the state of the South African townships and rural areas where the majority resides. The socio-economic conditions, as described by Atkinson (2014), indicate the prevalence of the legacy of apartheid, where the majority of residents from townships and rural areas are poor, confronted with high rates of unemployment, and poor spatial planning. The 1997 Urban Development Framework (UDF), which was later revised in 2016 to the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), was developed to address these inequalities and poor spatial planning. The UDF vision to address poor spatial planning and inequality for townships and informal settlements proclaims:

“Rebuilding the townships cannot occur in isolation from integrating strategies. The intention is to move actively away from the segregation of different parts of the country and to ensure equity across the urban landscape, thus offering all residents access to opportunities and facilities”.

It is on this basis that the democratic government post 1994, as prescribed in Chapter 10 of the Constitution Section 195(1)(d), “must that be provided impartially, fairly, equitable and without bias” in the provision of services to all the citizens. This is clear evidence of the government’s commitment to improve service delivery. One also finds the same standpoint from many post-1994 policy frameworks, such as the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The first priority of the five policy programmes of the RDP was “Meeting Basic Needs” (Government of South Africa, 1994). These needs include access to employment, land, housing, water, electricity, education, transport, a clean and healthy environment, proper nutrition, healthcare, and social welfare.

The study by Nkomo (2017) on public service delivery in South Africa, focusing on the local sphere of government, revealed a mixed bag of findings. On one hand, for example, the study found unsatisfactory performance by municipalities in the maintenance road infrastructure and other services, particularly in rural areas. This also confirms the findings by Bohler-Muller et al. (2016) on the rampage of service delivery protests that engulfed the country. On the other hand, in urban settlements, the study by Nkomo (2017) paints a different picture. It revealed that there were positive assessments of local services delivery by the local sphere of government, mostly among the more educated, employed, and white Participants in the urban settlements. This might be interpreted as a good sign for the local government in urban areas, and at the same time being an indictment for local government in rural areas. These two contrasting pictures are an important basis for this study with its focus on rural communities, to see whether the picture is positively changing or regressing and to measure the gap in achieving the constitutional mandate as stipulated in Chapter 10 of the Constitution, Section 195(1)(d), provides that “service must be provided impartially, fairly, equitable and without bias”.

4) Batho Pele Principles (1997)

Referred to by Shava (2018) as “the mini-bible” on service delivery South Africa and introduced in 1997, these principles are founded on the ideology of what the then Minister of

Public Service and Administration called “building a public service capable of meeting the challenge of improving the delivery of public services to the citizens of South Africa” and affirmed that through Batho Pele Principles “access to decent public services is no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a few; it is now the rightful expectation of all citizens, especially those previously disadvantaged”. This is another attempt that the government put in place to ensure that the service is delivered to all the citizens.

James and Miza (2015) affirm that the Batho Pele Principles were introduced to improve service delivery and also to act as an important link that the government created with the citizens. In others, the Batho Pele Principles forms an “invisible bond” that the citizens must have with the government and constitute a degree of measure of service delivery. As noted by Nzimakwe and Mpehle (2012), who asserts that these principles are an important tool that the government will use to bring about change in the delivery of public service and ensure efficiency and effectiveness when the service is being delivered.

To see the influence of Batho Pele Principles in the implementation of PEPs to improve rural livelihoods, the eight principles are discussed below.

1) Consultation

This principle stresses that the provision of services by the state must follow a consultation process where the government and its representatives engage communities for whom the public service is planned. According to this principle, the implementation of any PEP in the community must follow a proper consultation process, where government and its agencies take to community to their confidence, explain the projects and their benefit to the community and then the community buys in and support the project. This principle also assists in reducing the phenomena of “white elephants”, where government implements projects without engaging the community, checking their needs and planning with them to ensure that the community takes ownership of the project and protects it. The vandalism of much infrastructure, such as in community parks and other recreational facilities, has been closely linked, according to Nzimakwe and Mpehle (2012), to a community not taking ownership of the infrastructure and facilities because government developed such facilities while ignoring the important principle of consultation and community engagement.

There are various platforms that government uses to engage community stakeholders, for example, in the development of the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and in workshops and *izimbizos* held by municipalities, including ward meetings.

2) Service Standards

Delivering public service is not only about “what” service is delivered but also “how” that service is delivered, which is the service standard. This principle requires that citizens be informed about the level and quality of the service they will receive to balance their expectations. This principle puts the monitoring of government projects into the hands of the end-users (community) in the sense that the community has a right and the power to raise those inconsistencies between the planned project or

service and what is actually being delivered. Das (2013) pointed out that in India, the implementation of the MGNREGA Programme is assessed and monitored through social audits done by communities and civil society organisations.

Sukmayeti (2018) refers to social audits as a way to verify how government programmes and services are being implemented, in a similar manner that the financial audits are being carried to verify how the funds are being used in an organisation or institution, whether the internal process and procedure are being followed or not, the aim of social audit is to improve the programme's impact to the community and ensure that its implementation sticks to the original plan and there is no unjust deviation. The delivery of public goods and services in India, particularly in the MGNREGA Programme, is monitored through social audits. This clearly demonstrates that social audit is not a new measure in PEPs for assessing the programme in line with the service standards and original commitments.

3) Access

This principle is also backed by Section 9 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right of equality before the law and freedom from discrimination. Principle 3 then emphasises that everyone should have equal access to public services and assets. Therefore, increasing access to basic state services is an important role that the government needs to play for its citizens to address the imbalances created by the apartheid system in the Country. PEPs are also implemented to close that gap.

4) Courtesy

This principle stresses that citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration when they are being served. Respect is critical for the state to show to its citizens, considering that they are, in fact, the ones who fund the state budget through tax. Furthermore, government is voted in by the citizens to serve their needs, which makes them the critical receivers of services.

Treating the citizens with courtesy and respect aids in cementing the relationship that the South African government wants to create with its citizens and reduces confrontation that is being witnessed on a daily basis between citizens and the state when communities demand services from government. In line with this principle, the implementation of PEPs should reflect the level of courtesy that the government shows to the citizens.

5) Information

Providing citizens with information is an important gesture by government to unlock the potential of the citizens to participate and appreciate the service being provided to them by the state. This principle emphasises that information on the public services to which residents are entitled should be provided in its entirety and with accuracy. Partnerships between the government and the citizens cannot be created when the state hides information from them. Even if things are not going well, government is expected to provide that information to the citizens and communities. Again, this is

also a constitutional responsibility that the government has. Section 32 of the Constitution provides that “everyone has a right to any information held by the state”. It is important in the implementation of PEPs that full and accurate information about the programme is provided to the communities where the programme is implemented. Reddy (2016) states that some of the many service delivery protests that the country experiences can be avoided if the government takes citizens into its confidence and provide full and accurate information timeously to them.

6) Openness and Transparency

In executing their public responsibilities and functions, government officials should exercise high levels of openness and transparency. This principle requires that government officials and public representatives must tell the citizens the manner in which national and provincial departments are managed, the cost associated with the running of these departments, as well as who the accounting officers are. They are dubbed “twin principles” aimed to assist the citizens if they are not satisfied with the level of service they are receiving to escalate their problems to the accounting officers and executive authorities of those departments or state owner institutions.

7) Redress

In what Sulla and Zikhali (2018) refer to as an opportunity to circumvent the spiral of service delivery protest by communities, government is expected to offer redress. This principle requires that if the state has committed to rendering services and certain standards but did not meet such, it owes the citizens an apology and explanation for why the commitments were not met. The principle further calls for a remedy to be provided in a speedy and effective manner if a promised service was not provided as per the agreed standards. According to this principle, when citizens register their complaints, state officials and representatives must show sympathy to the complainant and provide a positive response.

Government and its representatives even in the implementation of PEPs are cautioned never to make unachievable promises and commitments to citizens. This has been regarded by Nzimakwe and Mpehle (2012) as the source of mistrust the citizens have in the state. Citizens should be treated as rational people coming forward and honestly explaining the predicament regarding the promised service should be the order of the day. The problem ensued when the state keeps quiet and does not engage the communities on the promised services or when inconstant information is provided to the community about the promised service. These are all recipes for mistrust and seeding bed for confrontation between the state and the citizens.

8) Value for Money

This is the last principle and is aimed at curbing the rampage of corruption. This principle aims to enforce that the provision of public service should be done in an economical manner and efficiently to ensure that the citizens derive the best possible value for their money. The nature of PEPs, according to the ILO (2016), promotes the utilisation of labour as opposed to machines where practical, feasible and

economically sensible to generate additional job opportunities. In other words, labour-intensive delivery of PEPs should still conform to the principle of financial efficiency and value for money. PEPs should not be used as a tool to increase project costs and for corrupt intentions. Instead, they should offer value for money to the community and in the delivery of public service.

Delivery of basic public services and the creation of community assets by the government in South Africa is not a courtesy or option, but a human rights matter. Government is mandated by the Constitution to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to ensure access to basic services by society. Delivery of public service is guided by key policies and legislation of the country, and PEPs, as noted by McCord (2005), have been positioned as part of the mechanism to deliver public services and community assets with a focus on the rural areas. Within this paradigm, rurality in the South African context and the unique position of rural areas in accessing public services becomes an important element to appreciate.

4.3 Rurality in South Africa

Classification of the country on the basis of rural and urban areas has rather been very fluid. Instead, there is a general move towards an all-inclusive classification by the Municipal Demarcation Board of South Africa, a body entrusted with sectioning and creating South Africa's current municipal boundaries. Mubangizi (2010) asserts that the focus is rather on the functional connections that prevail between rural and urban areas. To this end, the Demarcation Board argues that:

The Constitution and Municipal Structures Act is silent on the concept of urban and rural when describing Category B municipalities. However, the White Paper of Local Government correctly points out that, in some cases, the separation of rural areas from cities and towns has imposed artificial political and administrative areas that are otherwise functionally integrated. It also creates inequality for rural residents who contribute to the town's economy but do not benefit from its resources (Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), 2003:2).

However, in view of essential government programmes such as the integrated rural development strategy and the urban renewal programme, these concepts remain important for statistical classification. Various characteristics pointing to the unique position of rural areas in South Africa have been provided, either from the point of view of accessing public services, livelihoods and a wide range of matters.

Rural areas in the South African context, according to Ferguson (2013), refer to areas with limited or without access to key infrastructure and ordinary public services. These include access to adequate and proper education facilities, healthcare facilities, water and sanitation. An examination of rurality in South Africa is incomplete without a discussion of its historical context, which includes basic service deprivation, labour reserve areas, homeland system of administration, breakdown of land management systems and other related factors, these are explored further in section 4.3.5.

In addition, rural areas are also characterised by inferior quality of services provided by the state, such as insufficient quantities of water provided and inferior infrastructure and other essential basic

services. According to an HSRC (2012) report, rural areas are further characterised by their relative geographical inaccessibility and long distances between households. The topographical features of rural areas tend to hinder physical and easy access to essential public amenities, such as schools, police stations, healthcare facilities and places of work. These characteristics are further discussed below.

4.3.1 Geographical Remoteness

This refers to long distances between the location where communities live and many amenities where they access public services and places of work. Compared to urban areas, in some rural areas in many parts of the country, according to an HSRC (2012) report, one must travel between 40km and 80km to town to access some public services. With these distances, equitable access to public services which is guaranteed by the Constitution is affected for rural communities. The Constitutional right of rural communities is then compromised as compared to their urban counterparts. How can PEPs assist rural communities in bridging the gaps in accessing public services caused by the remoteness of their locations? The state has a constitutional obligation in terms of Section 9 (Equality) and Section 10 (Human Dignity) to find mechanisms to service rural communities in a similar manner to how it services urban communities.

4.3.2 Topographical Features

The land surface, shape and features of rural areas in South Africa, in many instances, are mountainous and have poor road infrastructure. Communities in rural areas struggle to access services due to topographical features as the main hindrance in the provision of community services by the state. However, as equal citizens of the land, rural communities also deserve the same level of public service delivery, just as their urban counterparts.

4.3.3 Low Population Densities

Rural communities in South Africa are also characterised by low population densities compared to urban communities. In most rural areas, communities still often believe in self-sustenance, including through agricultural activities (such as by ploughing their land and livestock farming). To accommodate these needs, they require vast land for livestock grazing and vegetable farming. That is why the population size ratio to the size of land is lower.

4.3.4 High Cost of Service Delivery

The low economy of scale in rural communities is one of the major reasons opined by many authors as the cause for poor delivery of service in rural communities. An example cited by Sulla and Zikhali (2018) is that the provision of water and electricity in rural areas with low population density is costly. A 500m water pipe that would connect more than five families in urban areas, may often only connect one family in a rural area. As such, you will need another 500m to connect another family with water. A similar argument was raised with electricity connection to rural communities. As a result, the

provision of public service in the rural areas is characterised by high costs compared to urban settlements. But it is interesting to note that historically white farm areas with the same distances between households were provided with services, such as roads, water and electricity, even though they are far apart.

4.3.5 Socio-Political Context

Geographic and demographic characteristics are not the only factors that determine the rurality of South Africa. There are other key socio-political factors that are critical in the discussion of rurality in the South Africa context. These are explored below. They include the historical and political context characterised by high levels of deprivation, the labour reserve areas, homeland system of administration, and land management system.

4.3.5.1 High Levels of Deprivation

The legacy of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa compounded deprivation of rural communities to service delivery. The 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development was developed as a new democratic government “policy framework for integrated and coherent socio-economic progress” (Government of South Africa, 1994). Developing a democratic, non-racial, and non-sexist society was the goal of this policy framework, which intended to mobilise all of the nation’s citizens on one path. This goal represented a fundamental transformation of South Africa (ibid).

This 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development acknowledges that rural areas in South Africa were separated into two. On the one hand, you had underdeveloped *bantustans*, and on the other hand, you had well-developed, white-owned commercial farming areas. As a result, the first priority programme was the Rural Development Programme, aimed to provide support to the delivery of water and sanitation to rural areas, followed by the “Land Reform Pilot” aimed at developing and supporting the integrated sustainable rural development model including the rural local government (Government of South Africa, 1994).

The development of rural areas has remained the key priority of government since 1994. Even in the current period, the NDP still regards rural area development among its priorities. Chapter 6 of the NDP acknowledges that:

since 1994, the main challenge for rural development has been marginalisation of the poor and to combat this a concerted effort is needed to improve access to resources by rural communities, including land, water, sanitation, infrastructure and skills. (NPC. (2012b:195)

4.3.5.2 Labour Reserve Areas

These are the regions in the country well-known for their role as labour-sending areas. Many mineworkers who migrated to mining towns such as Johannesburg, Witbank, and Rustenburg come from these areas, such as the former Transkei, Sekhukhuniland, etc. These areas, according to

Mayende (2010), are characterised by a long history of land dispossession and marginalisation both socially and economically. Before the arrival of white settlers, these communities were self-reliant and engaged in agricultural production for commercial and subsistence levels. However, with the arrival of white settlers and the introduction of colonial and apartheid legislation, such as the 1913 Native Land Act and the succeeding Group Areas Act of 1950, there was a sharp decrease and in some cases, an attempt at eradication of native subsistence and commercial farming. African farmers were denied access to the farming market, while white farmers were protected through apartheid and colonial legislation.

4.3.5.3 Homeland System of Administration

According to Nkomo (2017), the *bantustans* or homelands were created by the apartheid government where the black population was relocated to preclude them from living in the same urban areas as the minority white population. Homelands were the main administrative device for the exclusion of black South Africans from the country's political mainstay and were given responsibilities to run their independent government with limited resources as compared to whites who ran the administration. In fact, the Homelands system was aimed at completely removing and isolating Black people from "White South Africa". There were 10 homelands created in South Africa in line with the black ethnic groups, as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Homelands and ethnic groups

Homeland	Ethnic Group
Ciskei	Xhosa
Transkei	
Bophuthatswana	Tswana
KwaZulu	Zulu
Lebowa	Pedi
Venda	Venda
Gazankulu	Shangaan and Tsonga
Qwaqwa	Basotho
KwaNdebele	Ndebele
KwaNgwane	Swati

Source: Adapted from South African History Online (2020)

Even today, the old homeland areas are still characterised by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and lack of basic service delivery compared to urban areas and those that are earmarked for the white population (Ferguson, 2013).

4.3.5.4 Land Management System

Pre-1994, South African society was racially segregated by law. The apartheid government put regulations and systems to be used in servicing the racially and spatially segregated communities. These systems were aimed to entrench the objectives of the apartheid system and promote racial hierarchy through reserving the rights of the white minority to superior service. The land across the country was spatially planned, designed, configured and re-configured to conform to the segregationist and racist rationale of the apartheid government (Spluma, 2016). Areas occupied by

the black majority were characterised by minimum or a lack of basic services, infrastructure and facilities. This was the main aim of the apartheid system because the black majority was regarded as an inferior race compared to the white minority and did not deserve the same level of service as their white counterparts.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the concept of sustainable livelihoods as a widely used framework in community development to assist in organising the factors that limit or improve livelihoods prospects of the poor and vulnerable and identified a set of livelihoods capitals that are critical for livelihoods activities that produce ideal livelihoods outcomes. The origins of this concept and how it relates to PEPs and the provision of public services has also been provided.

While dealing with issues of service delivery, it was also important for one to provide a broader understanding of this term in general and by specifically looking at the South African context with a direct focus on PEPs. Service delivery was discussed in line with the guiding frameworks, principles and legislation in South Africa, including the Constitution, National Development Plan, and Batho Pele Principles. Finally, the rurality concept was then discussed with specific focus on South Africa with its main characteristics such as the geographic remoteness of such areas in terms of long distances between the location where communities live and many amenities where they access public services and places of work. These characteristics include the topographic features of the areas and the low population density and deprivation of basic services. But as noted, the examination of rurality in South Africa is incomplete without a discussion of its historical context, which includes basic service deprivation, labour reserve areas, homeland system of administration, breakdown of land management systems and other related factors, and these were also discussed. The next chapter discusses the research methodology and study design, including data collection and analysis methods adopted by this study.

CHAPTER 5

Research Methodology

5.0 Introduction

To aid in assessing the contribution of PEPs to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa, the previous chapter discussed the key concepts used in this study, which are sustainable livelihoods, service delivery and related legislative frameworks as well as rurality in the South African context. This chapter marks a critical phase of this research as it deals directly with how the research was conducted, the philosophy underpinning the study, data collection and participants. It is, therefore, vital for one to recap the questions that this study sought to address, and they are grouped under three broad themes as outlined below:

- 1) How does the EPWP in the PEPs contribute to the delivery of public services in rural areas?
- 2) In what way are the livelihoods of the beneficiaries or employees of the EPWP affected by the Programme?
- 3) What are the implementation challenges of the EPWP and how can they be addressed?

To start off, the first section of this chapter outlines the research paradigm underpinning this study. This is then followed by the second section, which provides a detailed discussion of the research methodology of this study, and includes the following topics and sub-sections: study design; study site; population; sampling strategy and sample size; methods utilised for data collection and data quality control; and data analysis. The third section then explains ethical considerations observed in conducting this study, including ethical clearance and approval for this study; informed consent by research participants; voluntary participation and confidentiality; and avoidance of harm. Finally, the fourth section concludes this chapter. In this study it is worth to note that the terms participants and interviewees are used interchangeable.

5.1 Research Paradigm

To answer the study questions, the constructivist paradigm was chosen as the most appropriate philosophy for this study. Hussain, Elyas and Nasseef (2013:12) contend that “research takes into account a particular philosophy of a researcher, informed by his underlying assumptions, principles, set of beliefs, values and research culture”. In the literature this notion is referred to as research paradigms. Mfusi (2014:32) citing Dieronitou (2014), Schwand (1989), Guba and Lincoln (1994) in support of this view, defines research paradigm as a “worldviews and beliefs system about the nature or reality, knowledge and values that guide researchers”. Patel (2015) refers to research parading as the set of mutual principles and arrangements jointly shared among scholars on how they go about understanding a problem as well as addressing that problem. The research paradigm covers all systems of interlinked practices, beliefs and thinking, which defines the type of investigation. According to Guba (1990, as cited by Patel, 2015), there are three main characteristics of a research paradigm. The first one is premised on the researcher’s reality, called the ontology of the researcher, and the second is about the way someone knows something, which is called the epistemology of the

researcher. Thirdly, it is about the methodology, which focuses on the way one goes about finding something.

This study adopted a constructivist paradigm developed by Max Weber, a German sociologist, jurist, and political economist, and Wilhelm Dilthey, a historian, psychologist, sociologist, and hermeneutic philosopher from German (Saunders and Thornhill, 2012). In constructivism, the world view and belief system, unlike positivism, has got no single reality or truth. For constructivists, the reality requires interpretation and in constructivist epistemology, knowledge is a construct of the human mind. As a result, reality is seems to be subjective and cannot be measured.

A constructivist paradigm is applied by qualitative researchers since they accept the understanding of a phenomenon from its original state or context (Neuman, 1997) without any manipulation. These researchers contend that reality is drawn from the following sources: language, belief systems, and people's interaction or social interaction (Patel, 2015). Additionally, human conduct, their observations, understanding and social players also provide an important role in appreciating reality. Human interaction and conduct increase the manner in which a phenomenon is understood. This is derived from the notion that human beings can understand a similar point in completely different ways. As such, for constructivist, multiple reality creates a foundation for understanding a phenomenon (Neuman, 1997). According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2004:85), "Language and spoken words cannot connect to the essential way but contains a worldview that colours how people see and experience the world".

Constructivists interpret epistemology in qualitative research as the way of collecting knowledge through discovering a participant's culture and their beliefs systems, watching them in their natural state, and participating in the group under study. This allows the investigator to learn more about their culture and belief system (Krauss, 2005). In epistemology, the constructivists, unlike positivists, are "subjective", for they accept multiple realities in researching a phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). For constructivists, the object that needs to be known and the knower are the same bodies and they influence each other (Grant and Osanloo, 2014:37).

As noted by Krauss (2005), Creswell (2008) and Neuman (1997), the difference found between positivist and constructivist paradigms is that positivists focus on a segment of a phenomenon and then generalise it to a wider environment. Constructivism studies the whole setting and then draws conclusions from the whole context. As such, the qualitative data attained through a constructivist paradigm is more reliable, since it's obtained through interactive processes with research participants and not through the manipulation of research variables. Qualitative research, as revealed by Saunders and Thornhill (2012), provides explanation even in complex written descriptions about the experiences people have related to the research subject and it is able to give provide adequate information on the human "angle" of the matter being investigated, such as their emotions, people's behaviour or relationship, rather than simply treating information or people as simple subjects. In choosing a research paradigm, it is important to understand the objective of the study and research methodology selected for the study and the two must be aligned.

Since this study was not experimental research or a survey, the researcher had no intention of exercising too much control or manipulation of the variables to determine the direction of causation, as it might be the case in experimental research. To assess the contribution of PEP to service delivery and rural livelihoods required a more in-depth interaction with research participants in their natural setting and context without any interference and manipulation of variables. Observing them in their

natural state and participating in the group under study allowed the investigator to learn more about their culture and beliefs system and draw conclusions from the whole context, informed by experience people had on the research subject and able to provide adequate information on the human “angle” of the matter being investigated such as their emotions, people’s behaviour or relationship, rather than simply treating information or people as simple subjects. The constructivist paradigm was adopted as the most appropriate philosophy for this study and the research questions outlined above are answered using this philosophical point of view.

5.2 Research Methodology and Research Methods for this Study

These two terms, research methodology and research methods, according to Gounder (2012:6), have been used interchangeably in research literature by many scholars, yet strictly speaking, the two terms are distinct. One key difference between these two terms is that research methods refer to the methods or approaches used by one in conducting an investigation on a subject or a topic. This includes the use of experiments, tests, surveys and other approaches. Research methods assist in the collection of data, facts, measurements and samples to find a solution to a particular problem. On the other hand, research methodology includes different techniques and procedures that one uses to conduct research and find out solutions to a particular problem. Research methodology is a systematic way of conducting research. It involves various stages and processes to solve the problem. These are considered the main technical differences between these two terms (research method and research methodology), which are often used interchangeable by many in the field of research.

It can, therefore, be argued that research methodology lays a foundation for research methods to be carried out correctly. This means that in any scientific or non-scientific study, research methodology comes first before the research methods.

Choosing a research approach requires much more than the researcher’s philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality (Kovalainen, 2016). Considering the objective of this research to assess the contribution of PEPs to service delivery and livelihoods in rural communities, there were three key questions that this study sought to respond to, as noted in 5.0 above.

These questions have what one refers to as “human elements”. They are designed to gain a deep understanding of the impact of the programme on communities and participants in their natural environment without any manipulation of variables or testing hypothesis, as in the case of quantitative research methods. The phenomenon being investigated requires one to get individual and group reflections and their views and written descriptions about their experiences, emotions, behaviour or relationship. No statistical or frequency analysis or theory testing was required for this study, as it would have been in the case of a quantitative research study. Considering all the above, as upheld by Gounder (2012) and Saunders and Thornhill (2012), the research questions plays an important role in choosing the research method, the most appropriate method that provided a holistic insight and responded to this phenomenon was a qualitative research method. This approach goes beyond the numbers and statistics or testing hypotheses as is the case in the quantitative research method. As such, a qualitative research approach was employed in this study because it can drill into the core imperatives of the study, since the study encompassed a great degree of social life and how the programme contributed to service delivery and sustainable livelihoods of the participants.

5.2.1 Study Design: Descriptive and Diagnostic Study

Kothari (2004) defines research design as a theoretical foundation on which a study is premised on. It establishes the framework, guidelines and process for data collection and instruments used. It also indicates the way in which the study data will be analysed and measured in line with the research objectives in a way that assists in achieving the intended purpose of the study. Mafuwane (2011) citing Leedy (1997) postulates that research design is a strategy used by a researcher to give a complete plan and approach to collect data. Similarly to the definition provided by MacMillan and Schumacher (2001), it becomes clear that research design is a strategy developed by the investigator to assist in identifying the research subjects, sites for the research and the approach to collect data in order to respond to the study objectives and questions. In the same breath, van Wyk (2014) refers to research design as a logical framework adopted by the researcher to premise his research on, and it provides the approaches on how data to be collected and analysed in the quest to respond to the research question. Therefore, a research design can then be regarded as a framework appropriate for collecting data, analysis, interpretation and generating evidence.

In assessing the contribution of PEPs to service delivery and livelihoods to rural communities, it is important that the adopted research design is able to provide the answers to this quest. In the same way as adopting the appropriate research methodology, it was critical to consider the study objectives and research questions in choosing a research design. In research domains, a variety of research design methodologies are employed, and each is related to the nature or goal of the investigation. Each has its own virtues and demerits, as well as advantages and downsides. Kothari (2004:44) “described these different research designs by conveniently categorising them in terms of the different studies and case objectives regarding research design” including: 1) *exploratory*, 2) *hypothesis-testing*, and 3) *descriptive and diagnostic research* studies.

5.1.2.1 Descriptive and Diagnostic Studies

The objectives of this study were to critically assess and evaluate the role of PEPs on service delivery and livelihoods in rural communities. In line with the definition by Kothari (2004), this study’s objective showed that it was not exploratory in nature (i.e. not aiming to discover new ideas or insight) nor hypothesis-testing or experimental where the relationship between variables was tested. In comparing all the three research designs (above), this study employed the descriptive and diagnostic research design as the most appropriate research design using a case study approach, since it was mainly concerned with the role of PEP on service delivery and in association with the livelihoods of the participants, and Robson (2002) adduces that the research methods and design or technics employed must be appropriate for the question you want to answer. Descriptive research, according to Behr (1983), is concerned with the conditions as they are, practices that prevail, beliefs and attitudes as shared, processes followed, and patterns or movements which are emerging. These were all prevalent on EPWP project sites. As such, this method was the most appropriate for this study.

As compared to surveys and developmental studies, which form part of the descriptive and diagnostic studies, Robson (2002) and Nachmias and Nachmias (2004) postulate that case studies are mainly concerned with investigating and interpreting certain attributes, characteristics and behavioural patterns of individual or group. Furthermore, case studies are concerned with observing an individual or collective of individuals at a particular given point, especially after something has happened, supposedly created a change in their life or environment. This directly links with the objectives of this study to assess the contribution of PEPs to service delivery and rural livelihoods. This study traces the impact of the programme at a “particular point especially after something has happened

supposedly created a change in their life or environment”, as articulated by Nachmias and Nachmias (2004). In this case, the building and maintenance of community assets such as roads and bridges, the jobs that have been created through these programmes, and how they affected the lives of communities.

5.2.2 Study Site

The EPWP is a nationwide government initiative, implemented across the country by all nine provinces. However, for the purpose of this study, two key programmes from the EPWP Infrastructure Sector (Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme) were identified and are further discussed below in line with their rural-focused objectives.

Of the four EPWP sectors, Infrastructure is the biggest (see Table 3 above) when it comes to the number of work opportunities to be created over a five-year period of the programme, EPWP (2019). In the current fourth phase of the EPWP (2019-2024), the Infrastructure Sector has “a target to create 1.6 million work opportunities by 2024”. This is equivalent to 32% of the total five million work opportunities targets for the entire EPWP Phase IV, as indicated in Table 3 above. The selected programme for this study was introduced and discussed in sections (1.7 and 2.3.1.1) above, and they are:

A. Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme

According to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport (KZN DoT, 2008:2), “*zibambele* is a Zulu word meaning doing it for ourselves”. It is a labour-intensive programme for rural road routine maintenance initiated in 1999 by the KZN DoT, with the target to create 40 000 employment opportunities over a period of 10 years. The programme targets unemployed households in rural communities. The recruitment of the participants is community-driven, and members of the community suggest the most destitute households where there is nobody working to participate in the programme. Priority is given to female-headed households.

This programme is similar to the Kenyan Lengthsman Model (Ngubane, 2011). The programme appoints a household rather than an individual to perform the general rural road maintenance, which includes patching potholes, grass cutting, and clearing drainage along a 1km to 1.5km stretch of the road next to where that household is located. The DoT is the programme coordinator and funder. It allocates hand tools and equipment (such as wheelbarrows, spades, rakes, sickles, traffic cones for safety on the road, etc.) to be used by these household contractors. They are also allowed to use these tools for private purposes, such as in family agricultural activities or other private economic activities. Their contracts are renewed on an annual basis, depending on whether that household is still regarded as destitute through community structures.

The Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme has three main key objectives:

- 1) To offer continuous and predictable employment opportunities to impoverished communities and families with the aim of ending and reversing the poverty cycle in rural communities.
- 2) To introduce cost-saving, community-driven and labour-intensive approaches in the

maintenance of rural road networks in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province. This initiative has two benefits: fulfilling the Department's mandate to construct and maintain its road networks, and the saving of costs that it would have incurred using the conventional methods of road maintenance.

- 3) The last objective of the programme is to empower and develop rural women. The programme aimed to train all its participants in technical road maintenance skills as well as life skills.

B. Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme

Welisizwe is Zulu word loosely translated as “Assist the nation in crossing over”, according to the Government of South Africa (2021:1). This is a project of the DPWI started in 2009, in partnership with the DoD, SANDF Engineering Division, National DoT, and National DCoG working with the Premiers' offices, provincial departments of roads and transport, and local municipalities. The objective of the programme is to construct low-cost bailey bridges which improve safe and easy access by rural communities to government key service delivery points, such as police stations, health facilities, schools, social services and others. Furthermore, the programme improved “safe access for rural communities to basic services, such as schools, clinics, police stations and other service providers, such as the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)”.

During the handing-over of one of the bridges on 7 February 2020 in Nkobonga, Eastern Cape, Ms Patricia de Lille, the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, said:

“Today we are building bridges to bring inclusion, break divides and improve access to schools, clinics and economic opportunities for the people in our rural communities. However, we cannot forget that sadly, before these bridges were constructed, many lives were lost, especially children who have drowned trying to cross rivers and indeed those wounds remain for the families who have lost loved ones”, (Polity, 2020:12).

Fourie (2006) notes that the apartheid system created homelands characterised by a lack of service delivery and the absence of key community infrastructure, such as police stations, health facilities, schools, social services, and many other amenities. During rainy periods, some facilities are not reachable due to impassable river crossings. School-going children are unable to cross the rivers after the rain safely, and many drownings have been reported. Some of these rivers are also crocodile-infested (KZN DoT, 2018).

These barriers created by the apartheid system blocked linkages between communities and exacerbated under-development. Communities living across the river, even if less than 2km from healthcare facilities, police stations or post offices where they collect their old age or child support grants, have to spend extra just to reach those facilities because they cannot cross the river safely. Unemployed young people who want to go to police stations to certify their documents and take them to the post office, also experience the same challenge of spending extra money they don't have just to reach those amenities because the river is full and there are no proper bridges for them to cross safely.

The above programmes have been intensely implemented in three main provinces: KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Free State. KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is the third smallest province by land size in the

country but is the second largest contributor (approximately 16%) to the South African GDP after Gauteng. The province consists of a highly diversified agricultural sector, which include sheep, cattle, dairy, citrus fruits, corn, sorghum, cotton and bananas farming. The unemployment rate in the province according to Stats SA 2022 quarter 2 labour force survey was 32.7% below than 33.9% national average. On the other hand, the Eastern Cape is the second largest province in the country by land size but contribute to only 8% to the Country's GDP. It is the poorest province in South Africa with the highest unemployment rate in the country at 42.8% Stats SA 2022 quarter 2 labour force survey. The Eastern Cape economy is characterised by the concentration of economic activity in urban nodes and the prominence of secondary and tertiary sectors. One of the dominant sectors in the province is the manufacturing sector, largely driven by the automotive subsector. Moving to the Free State Province, the third-largest province in the country taking up 10.6% of South Africa's land area, with the 32.4% unemployment rate, slightly lower than that of KZN according to Stats SA 2022 quarter 2 labour force survey and only contributes 5% to the Country's GDP. Agriculture and mining are the most dominant industries in the province

The study targeted projects and work opportunities created over the 2019/20 financial year and still continuing in the current financial year, i.e. 2020/21 (multi-year projects). With the aid of the EPWP spatial distribution map (Appendix 1), which outlines project concentration as well as work opportunities reported in each province. In KwaZulu-Natal, the following district municipalities were selected: Harry Gwala, Ugu, iLembe and King Cetshwayo Municipalities (previously reported or referred to as uThungulu). These districts were chosen because of the spatial distribution of EPWP projects and the number of work opportunities reported under each district. In the Eastern Cape, the following districts were selected: Amathole, OR Tambo and Chris Hani District Municipalities. The selection also took into account where the bridges and infrastructure were built. The same is true for the Free State Province. Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality was selected because this is where the Monatsa Project was implemented.

As noted above, the reason for choosing the EPWP Infrastructure Sector among other sectors was that the Infrastructure Sector is the largest sector within the EPWP, and unlike other sectors, most public bodies implementing the EPWP report on work opportunities. This made this sector more representative among EPWP implementing bodies.

When it comes to selecting these programmes and provinces, firstly, Zibambele is the largest programme within the Infrastructure Sector in terms of the number of work opportunities the programme created. KZN and Eastern Cape Provinces were the leaders in terms of work opportunities due to these programmes. Therefore, it was imperative if one had to assess the impact of the PEPs on service delivery and rural livelihoods that programmes that were large in scale were chosen and also spread out geographically, rather than focusing on one geographic location.

Secondly, despite Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme being fairly new in the EPWP family of programmes, its focus directly resonated with what this study sought to assess: whether the programme improved safe access for rural communities to basic services.

Lastly, there is an interconnection between the two programmes as they are both focusing on the road infrastructure, which was regarded as the backbone of service delivery, according to the KZN DoT (2018).

5.2.3 Study Population

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2004), a study population is regarded as a collective of set or group that meets all the characteristics identified for the study. Researchers encounter challenges with regard to estimating the population size and where the sample will be drawn. Therefore it is very important to know your population.

There are three key elements identified by Nachmias and Nachmias to define population, i.e. in terms of (1) content, (2) context, and (3) time. In this study, the population was divided into three categories. The first category was the EPWP workers (generally referred to as EPWP participants, and in this study these terms were used interchangeably) employed in the Programme from the 2019/20 financial year until 2020/21 across all the three targeted provinces: KZN, the Eastern Cape, and the Free State through the eight district municipalities indicated above in the study site section (5.2.2). The reason for choosing this period was because EPWP project were short- to medium-term in nature, so if one went beyond this period to include, for example, the 2017/18 financial year, there were greater chances that the project might have been completed and therefore project participants could not be found.

The second category of the study population was the officials and managers from national departments, provincial departments and municipalities coordinating and/or implementing EPWP projects in the above period within the same jurisdictions. Besides the identified district municipalities above, each province has one department tasked with the responsibility to provide overall coordination and reporting for the EPWP, while others deal with the implementation of the programme in line with the departmental mandate. As a result, in all three provinces, the three coordinating departments were also included, as well as the departments responsible for the implementation of the above programmes discussed in section 5.2.2. Furthermore, the national department responsible for the overall coordination of the EPWP in South Africa and the leader of the Infrastructure Sector, under whom the identified programme falls, was also included to gauge their perspective on the effect of the Programme on service delivery and rural livelihoods.

The third and final category was that of community informants (this included ward councillors, church leaders, business leaders and school principals) in the areas where the EPWP projects were implemented.

5.2.4 Sampling Strategies

For one to be able to generalise findings, significant consideration must be given in choosing a sampling approach and method. Denscombe (1998) asserts that the sample is the initial part in the study that requires serious consideration because if there must be any level of reliability of the results, a sound sampling strategy must be employed. It needs to ensure that if the entire population is sampled, the results must stay the same. Similarly, in a definition provided by Bryman (2008), a sample is a part or subsection taken from the entire population of the study to be investigated. The study results will depend on how a sample is created.

As noted by Denscombe (1998:32), “one important element to be considered in generalising the findings is how representative the sampling is”. The main question to ponder on in sampling is whether the selected sample accurately represents the population. Bryman (2008) asserts that a representative sample is one which is a true reflection and precisely mimics the entire population to

instil confidence in the result outcomes. A good sample is one that is a miniature of the target population. Sampling strategies are divided into two forms, the first one being probability sampling, and the second sampling strategy is non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling, according to Hyder and Lussier (2016), refers to a selection of a sample by means of a random selection whereby all the members of the population have an equal chance to be included in the sample. Generally, probability sampling is regarded as selecting the sample that has the highest chances of achieving representativeness of the population. It assists in minimising the sampling error. Under probability sampling, there are various forms of sampling strategies used. They include simple random sampling, systematic sample, stratified random sampling, and multi-stage cluster sampling.

The second type of sampling strategy is referred to as non-probability sampling and is defined by Bryman (2008:54) as a sampling strategy that does not use the selection of a sample by means of a random approach. Non-probability sampling strategy covers all forms of sampling that do not use probability guidelines. Compared to a probability sampling method, in this sampling strategy, other parts of the population have higher chances of being chosen in relation to others. Four main categories of non-probability sampling identified include: 1) quota sampling, 2) convenience sampling, 3) purposive sampling, and 4) snowball sampling.

All these research sampling strategies have their own advantages and disadvantages over one another. Therefore the nature of the study and other key factors such as time and cost are critical in determining the most appropriate sampling strategy.

The sampling strategy for this study was chosen according to the way the population was categorised. For instance, for the category that involved officials and managers responsible for coordinating and implementing the EPWP, purposive, non-probability sampling was chosen as the most appropriate sampling strategy to be employed in this category. This was a known group with a specific role in the programme, and they were likely to provide valuable information as compared to using random sampling. This decision is supported by Saunders (2012), who defined a purposive, non-probability sampling strategy as an approach whereby a researcher based their decision on past experience, the objectives of the study, and the nature of the population when the sample is selected. It is further maintained that this sampling strategy is more useful when one deals with a restricted population to serve as your main source of information in line with the objectives of the study and how it is designed, which was clearly the case in this study. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) said, “Many qualitative researchers employ [...] purposive, and not random, sampling method. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where [...] the processes being used are most likely to occur.”

The second category of the study population was community informants (this included ward councillors, church leaders and school principals). Following the same logic as choosing the sampling strategy for officials and managers responsible for coordinating, the same approach was applied for key community informants. A purposive, non-probability sampling strategy was also employed.

However, in the third category of the population, which is the EPWP participants (workers in the programme), a snowball sampling strategy was used. Robson (2002) defined it as a strategy in which an investigator from the entire population single out key person/s that they will interview, intern after finishing the interview, the investigator will then request the same person/s to identify other members (as an informant) that can also be interviewed. This process repeats in the same way. This strategy is mostly used if one has difficulties in identifying participants from the population, as was the case

with the EPWP participants involved in this programme. Their features and characters were similar, but started with the team leader, who then identified the next person to be interviewed was very useful.

But one of the key challenges and the big question with this method is, when do you tell if enough interviews have been conducted? Hence the researcher in this study adopted the principle of saturation as a yardstick to determine if enough interviews were conducted. This principle is defined by Guest, Namey and Chen (2020:2) as the stage at which “no additional data are being found”. Most qualitative research reaches this stage whereby the interviewer is no longer getting new information from the research participants. There are various reasons for a researcher to reach the point of saturation. Chief among those is that if you are interviewing a group of participants who share similar characteristics such as environment, historical background, and financial and social background, at some point, you will reach the stage whereby you no longer receive additional information. In this study, the saturation point was reached and the total number of participants wherein the saturation point was reached is discussed below in section 5.2.5 D.

5.2.5 Sample Size

According to Derera (2011), a sample size is referred to as the real quantity that is selected from the population as a representative of the same population in terms of all the features and characters. As noted above, the population was divided into three categories, and this is further illustrated in Table 7 below. Arriving at this sample size, various factors, as noted by Bryman (2008), were considered. They included the availability of resources to cover the sample, time and cost to cover the sampled population. As a result, the following boundaries and features of the sample applied:

- A. **Officials and managers** responsible for the coordination and/or implementation of the EPWP from the 10 key departments (i.e. National DPWI, Provincial DPWs, Provincial DoTs, and Provincial COGTAs), based on their role in the implementation and coordination of the EPWP in each province. As such, a minimum of three departments were targeted in each province, with the National DPWI being the tenth department due to its overall coordination role in the EPWP. Provincial DoTs as well as COGTA were included due to their role in the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and municipal coordination, respectively. In each department, three officials were identified due to their roles and responsibilities in each department when it comes to the EPWP. Furthermore, to get a perspective from the department responsible for the overall coordination of EPWP at the national level, three officials from the National DPWI, based on their roles and responsibilities within the EPWP, were also sampled. This resulted in a total of thirty (30) research participants from this category of the population.
- B. **EPWP Coordinators and Champions** are officials at municipal levels responsible for implementing and coordinating the EPWP this level. Using the same reasoning as with the officials and managers of provincial departments above, one EPWP champion or coordinator was identified due to the role they played in the programme. As a result, thirty-two (32) research participants were sampled from this category of the population. They come from each of the municipalities identified above in section 5.2.2: Harry Gwala, Ugu, iLembe, and King Cetshwayo District Municipalities in KZN; Amathole, OR Tambo, and Chris Hani District Municipalities in the Eastern Cape; and Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality in the Free State.

- C. **Community informants** comprised local ward councillors, school principals, church leaders, local business leaders, and other prominent persons in the area where projects were implemented. A total of 15 community informants for this category of the population were sampled, in line with the identified projects in their communities.
- D. **EPWP participants** (also referred to as EPWP workers) were employed or currently still working in the programme. This category of the population was selected through the snowball sampling technique from the identified projects in the eight district municipalities. The researcher started off with one (1) research participant per project. For this category of participants, the data saturation point (mentioned in section 5.2.4) was reached after 25 participants were interviewed, and the sample size for this population was 32 participants.

As discussed in section 5.2.4 above, two sampling strategies (snowball and purposive, non-probability sampling) were adopted for this study. These strategies were implemented for different categories of research participants.

In total, the sample size included 67 participants. The sample size took into account the nature and fluidity of the EPWP projects as well as that of participants. That is, these projects are short- to medium-term in nature and the researcher had no control over when the project ends even though careful considerations were made in the sampling and selection of projects.

Table 7 below provides a summary of how the sampling strategies differed according to the categories of research participants, as well as the method used for data collection for each category of research participants, and finally, the sample size for each category of research participants.

Table 7: Summary of the population categories, sampling and data collection

	Population and Category		
	Category 1 EPWP Participants	Category 2 Officials, Managers, Coordinators and Champions	Category 3 Community Informants
Sampling Strategy	Snowball sampling	Purposive, non-probability	Purposive, non-probability
Data Collection	Telephone interviews	Focused group discussion via virtual platforms (zoom and MS Teams) or telephone interviews, depending on the availability of participants	Telephone interviews
Sample Size	32 participants	20 participants	15 participants

5.2.6 Methods for data collection

There are various forms of data collection depending on the nature of the study and research methodology the researcher adopted. For instance, according to Robson (2002), most surveys use a questionnaire, which is administered in three possible ways: 1) self-completion questionnaire, whereby research participants complete the questionnaire on their own; 2) direct interviews, where an interviewer directly asks questions from the participants and records those answers personally on the questionnaire; and 3) phone interviews, in which the interviewer engages the participants through the telephone. Here, the interviewer asks questions to the participant via the phone and records answers in the questionnaire as the participant responds.

Considering the number of research participants and the fact that this study adopted a qualitative research methodology, which is an approach that is concerned with interpretation and understanding of any phenomenon or subject being studied and drills into the core imperatives of the subject, principles and values (Adam, 2013; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010:94), this study used semi-structured in-depth interview questions that were open-ended for all the three categories of research participants (see Appendix 2: Study semi-structured and open-ended questions). This method was critical for participants since it was capable of providing answers to even challenging situations. Hence, it was anchored in the epistemology paradigm. This is in line with the recommendations by Somekh and Lewin (2011) that in order to address the “breath versus depth” issue in the research, one had to engage a variety of possible project sites whereby key project staff members were interviewed through “progressive focus” group for detailed discussions in a selected site.

This study was conducted during one of the most difficult times in global history. The era of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, which was declared by the WHO on 3 January 2020 as a global emergency. The Covid-19 pandemic took both health systems and the global economy by storm. Nations of the world scrambled to find answers to curb the disruptive effect of the disease in their healthcare and economic systems (Dladla, 2021:2). Various crucial and extreme measures were taken by “government to curb the spread of the various in South Africa. Those measures included the nationwide lockdown, which commenced on 26 March 2020”. Government continuously reviewed the lockdown levels based on how the virus and the infection rate were spreading.

The data was collected between 1 February 2021 and 30 June 2021. Considering the Covid-19 regulations and conditions that prevailed, strategies and approaches to collect data were revised to comply with the two notices issued by the University’s Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) on 14 January 2021 and 9 March 2021 regarding Covid-19 Risk-Adjusted Level 3 and 1 Guidelines for Researchers and Postgraduate Students.

In attempt to prevent the infection from spreading and comply with the government health protocols and regulations regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, the University encouraged the use of telephone or online interactions and online surveys under both the Covid-19 Risk adjusted Level 3 and 1 as declared by the President and commenced on the 11 January 2021. Under these conditions, research that required human contact was prohibited by the University. However, on 28 February, the Country was moved downward from alert Level 3 to 1. As such, some of the regulations and Covid-19 conditions were relaxed due to the decreased rate of infections and the spreading of the various. As a result, the University lifted some of the restrictions imposed on research that required human contact. However, still encouraged the use of telephone or online interactions and online surveys where practically feasible for the study.

Due to the nature of the study and availability of research participants, two methods to collect data were used for the categories of research participants outlined in Table 7 above and the reasons for choosing these approaches are outlined below:

- 1) Online Interactions (Virtual) Method:** The Zoom and Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) platforms were used particularly for category 1 and 2 officials, managers, coordinators and EPWP champions. This method was more feasible because these are government officials and most of them had access to these facilities. The facility allowed them to connect easily wherever they were.

Before the data was collected, a database of the potential research participants (from the sample) was formally requested from the departments and municipalities that took part in the study following the strict University ethical protocols, wherein these department and municipalities were provided with the gatekeeper's letter as well as assured that the information provided will only be used for the purpose of this study and will not be shared with the third party without their consent. This database served for two purposes: 1) it was used for proper record keeping; and 2) it was also used as a data collection checklist and monitoring tool to assist the researcher gauge the work done and the remaining tasks ahead. Once the database was compiled, appointments were scheduled, whereby the potential research participants were first contacted telephonically, the researcher introduced himself, outlined the research project and then invited the potential participants to a virtual focus group discussion session. If the potential participants agreed, then the consent forms were then e-mailed together with the virtual meeting link for that particular group.

The researcher facilitated the discussion during focused group discussions and electronically recorded the sessions. A minimum of four to six research participants were targeted for each session for easy management and to ensure that they all have enough time to speak in the group, as opposed to having a larger number of participants, but not all have sufficient time to speak. This was also necessitated by the platform used to conduct this session. Before each session started, the research participants were reminded of their rights in terms of the signed consent letters. A total of five focus group discussion sessions were conducted with a total number of 20 participants.

- 2) Telephone interviews:** All other research participants who could not be interviewed or participate in focus group discussion via the virtual platforms (Zoom or MS Teams) were then scheduled for one-on-one telephone interviews. These categories included the EPWP workers (category 1), community informants (category 3), and those who form part of the category 2 but for various reasons could not form part of the focus group discussions that were scheduled for this category.

Using the same database created for all these categories of research participants, consent forms (particularly for EPWP workers) who did not have access to e-mails or WhatsApp (messaging application) were sent via the assistance of their supervisors (government officials) who printed and distributed the forms to potential research participants. These officials (some of them formed part of category 2 and already interviewed). Some were responsible for EPWP Projects and supervisors of the EPWP Workers. These officials were very interested in study, and some even said a study like this should have been commissioned by their departments or municipalities. As such, some volunteered to assist in distributing the consent forms to the identified EPWP workers who formed part of the study but did not have

access to email or WhatsApp because they met and interacted with them on a daily basis on the EPWP project sites. This was very helpful, especially since some of the EPWP workers did not have smartphones and also did not have WhatsApp or emails.

Then telephone calls were made and interviews were scheduled and conducted. The interviews were also telephonically recorded to assist during the data analysis stage. During the start of any interview, as was the case with category 2 participants, the participants were reminded of their rights in terms of the signed consent letters. Category 1 and category 3 participants were a bit different from category 2 in terms of language usage. Some of them were not fluent in English and preferred to express themselves in their own mother tongues. My ability to speak isiZulu, isiXhosa and Sotho came very useful, as I was then able to translate and explain some of the questions verbally that they were struggling to understand in their mother tongue, which made the process easier. Most EPWP workers were on-site during the interviews, and their supervisors permitted them to take part in the study. The snowball sampling strategy worked well in this regard. Through telephone interviews, a total of 25 research participants were interviewed from all three different categories.

This method of data collection, especially for the first category of research participants, had some few challenges, which were mainly on the connectivity, as most of the participants were in the field during the day where sometimes network signals were poor depending on the network provider the participants were using. However, these were addressed by scheduling interviews early or while the participants were back in their homes, which allowed them to switch to different networks (with family members, which is a normal practice when they receive calls and network is poor). As for the government officials, there were no challenges experienced by using the virtual platforms. Many officials were used to it, as it became the widely used meeting method during Covid-19 pandemic.

5.2.7 Data Quality Control

At the nucleus of any research, is the data. You can have a sound theoretical framework, research strategies etc., but if your data is invalid or unreliable, your whole study is jeopardised and its findings remain inconclusive. To avoid that, great care needs to be taken with the data-gathering instrument to ensure it is: 1) *reliable* and 2) *valid*. Reliability is referred to by Saunders and Thornhill (2012) as the ability of the instrument to obtain the same response, even when used more than one time. According to Bryman (2008), validity refers to the veracity of the research results and the conclusions drawn from such, considering the degree of compliance with the scientific research process and requirements to make such conclusions. When a research outcome is regarded as reliable, it means other researchers, given the same instruments under the same conditions, will come up with the same results. Validity is measured in four main areas in a study, i.e. internal and external validity, and ecological and measurement validity.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data-gathering instruments as well as the study itself, the researcher first conducted a pilot study. There were nine (9) participants involved in the pilot study. Two (2) were officials from the National DPWI based at the Head Office. They were chosen based on their proximity geographically to the researcher and also based on their role in the Programme. A face-to-face interview was conducted with this group, taking into account all the Covid-19 health protocols and social distancing procedures. The interviews were recorded for reference purposes. The second group also comprised two (2) participants, one from a municipality in KZN and the other from the Provincial DPWI coordinating the EPWP in the Free State Province. The interviews with these

participants were conducted through the online platform Zoom. The third group comprised three (3) EPWP workers from each of the targeted provinces. To ensure clarity, as some of the participants were not comfortable with English only, isiZulu, Sotho or isiXhosa was used to further explain the questions. The last group comprised two (2) key informants (one from Free State (a ward councillor) and the other one from the Eastern Cape Province (a local businessperson)).

Using all these approaches, there were various elements that one wanted to test beyond the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. One of those elements was the time it takes to complete the questions in each of the methods used to collect data (face-to-face, virtual platform and telephonic interview). This was critical when one had to set up interview appointments with the research participants. The second element was to test if the questions were understood in the same way they were intended (i.e. the questions were not ambiguous) and any harm was avoided for participants, as discussed in section 5.3.4 below. The third element was to test the interpretations of the questions in isiZulu, Sotho or Xhosa, as this was anticipated to be the case in the field to avoid any confusion for participants. Lastly, the pilot tested the appropriateness of each of the platforms used to conduct interviews with each group of participants.

The pilot study proved to be very useful in testing the data collection instrument and questions asked in the field to eliminate any ambiguities and phrase questions or the choice of words. It also assisted the researcher to familiarise himself with this exercise. Furthermore, it also ensured that the appropriate methodology was chosen, including the sampling method as indicated above, looking at how the study was designed and its features. Finally, it ensured that the Participants were not put under undue pressure or persuaded to provide a particular answer or set of answers as a way of influencing research outcomes.

5.2.8 Data Analysis

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:34) define data analysis as the interpretation of the raw research data to make sense and provide meaning to that data in relation to the aim of the study. Kothari (2004) contends that data analysis incorporates the usage of substances, literature, and behaviour to assign meaning to the data. This study adopted a qualitative research method. After the appropriate and adequate raw data was collected, it was then analysed using a thematic analysis approach in line with the objectives of the study and the research methodology selected. Six phases of thematic analysis were followed to analyse this data. Details are provided in Chapter 6.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis focuses mainly on scrutinising the data and identifying emerging themes and patterns from the collected data. Using this approach, the researcher thoroughly examined, evaluated and compared the data. Inductive analyses were carried out, which involved the integration and synthesising of the qualitative data. Answers were systematically sorted, coded and classified according to themes that were emerging and then later categorised, arranged, assessed, matched and reviewed. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) emphasised that to assign meaning to qualitative data, there are four key factors to consider: evaluative, diagnostic, contextual and strategic factors. These four key categories were all utilised in data analysis in this study since all the data was coded, thematically organised and interpreted to come to an appropriate conclusion.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

Van Wyk (2014) defines ethics as the ability to know and differentiate what is morally correct or

incorrect in the face of society. Any research study gives rise to the question of ethics in how the study is conducted. Hence, due consideration has to be made for a study to address ethical matters and this must form “an integral part of the study planning and data collection”, Thomas, (2010:31). “Ethical behaviour is of paramount importance in research as it enables individuals to carry out their research in a dignified manner with honesty and respect for human rights”, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2007:12).

The investigator had to work directly with the research subjects in this study, as well as with their private and sensitive data. As a result, care was taken to protect both the participants' identities and the information they provided. The investigator took the necessary precautions to safeguard the confidentiality of participant information and their identity in accordance with the ethical policy and guidelines of the University. To ensure compliance with the general research ethical standards and University of KwaZulu-Natal's particular ethical requirements, the steps and considerations described in the next section were applied.

5.3.1 Ethical Clearance and Informed Consent

In line with the University of KwaZulu-Natal's HSSREC requirements, the researcher was granted permission to conduct this study and interact with the research participants. The ethical clearance certificate to conduct this investigation was received (see Appendix 3: Ethical Clearance Certificate). This approval took into account, among others, the permission sought by the researcher from the DPWI (see Appendix 4: DPWI Gate Keepers Letter) as the overall coordinator of the EPWP implemented by the public bodies listed in section 5.2.2 on study sites.

In addition, following Leedy and Ormrod (2014:105), “informed consent must be sought from research participants and they must be educated on the nature of the study and its intention”. The researcher's introductory letter, which outlines the specifics and goals of the study (see Appendix 5: Researcher's Introductory Letter), was first given to the participants. The researcher further explained this in their language of choice, and the participants were allowed the opportunity to ask questions if they had any clarification needs. Second, if they wished to engage in the interview, the participants were asked to sign the consent form. All this was done under strict healthcare protocols, as discussed in section 5.2.6, based on the notices issued by the University's HSSREC regarding Covid-19 guidelines for researchers and postgraduate students. Duplicates of the signed consent form, the introductory letter, and the certifications of ethical clearance are included in annexures in this thesis.

5.3.2 Voluntary Participation

Participants taking part in a study of your own free will is essential in all academic environments. Van Wyk (2014) upholds that voluntary participation in a research project is when research participants individually and of their own free will make the choice to participate in the study without being forced or coerced to do so. In this study, no participants were obliged to take part. In fact, they were clearly informed of their rights to withdraw their participation if they felt they were no longer interested or wanted to take part in this study. They did not need to provide any reason or explanation for their withdrawal. This was explained when consent to participate in the study was first sought and also when the interviews started. The researcher emphasised the rights of participants.

Participants' responses indicated that they were aware of the study's objectives and methods. They also stated that their involvement in the research was fully voluntary and they could revoke it at any

moment if they so desired.

5.3.3 Confidentiality of Participants and Anonymity

Similar to voluntary participation, confidentiality of information is critical in any academic research project. The right to privacy and protection of participants' personal information is paramount. Morgan (2014) asserted that confidentiality refers to the protection of the participant's private information and not disclosing what was discussed between the researcher and participant to the third party without the consent of the participant.

In this study, the researcher kept the right to privacy of the participants, and all their sensitive information is protected, in line with the University policy. Furthermore, the real names and identities of the participants were not used in the study; instead, fictitious names were used where necessary.

5.3.4 Avoidance of Harm

This study involved human subjects and in a diverse society like South Africa, in terms of culture, language and other factors, one may find questions being interpreted differently by the participants. As a result, great care was taken to understand the participants first and their societal and cultural background. The pilot study was also used to assist in this regard. However, this cannot always be completely avoided. Therefore, at the end of each interview stage, participants were given an opportunity to raise their concerns on questions that did not sit well with them or if they felt offended by some questions. This was to assist in clarifying any misunderstanding that might have happened and also to look at how the question could be phrased better with the next participants without losing the meaning. As asserted by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016), in dealing with human subjects in research, great caution needs to be taken to avoid any pain and suffering of the research participants. This forms an integral part of ethical considerations in social science studies.

5.4 Conclusion

Research is regarded as a logical and systematic approach that seeks first-hand, valuable information and evidence on a specific subject or area. In conducting research, one needs to follow a particular approach using different techniques referred to as research methodologies. The qualitative research methodology was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for this study in line with the study objectives. This chapter went on to discuss the study design and explored various research paradigms, with the constructivist paradigm being adopted as the most appropriate paradigm, in line with the objectives of the study.

Furthermore, three provinces in South Africa, KZN, Eastern Cape and Free State, were selected as the study sites due to the implementation of the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme in these provinces. These two maintenance programmes were selected for this study. The study population and sampling strategy, including the appropriate data collection and analysis methods, were further discussed. Finally, ethics and related matters, such as informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and the avoidance of harm, were all discussed in this chapter. The next chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation of the study results.

CHAPTER 6

Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results

6.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined and discussed the adopted research paradigm for this study. It further elaborated on the research methodology utilised by the study, alongside the study design, the study population as well as sampling and data collection techniques. The study's findings and analyses are presented in this chapter. To carry out the data analysis and interpretation of the study findings, the chapter commences by recapping the objectives and the questions this study endeavours to answer. This is followed by a detailed data analysis using a thematic approach, the interpretation of the results, and then the conclusion.

It is important to note that the analysis and discussion of the study results are disaggregated, according to the three categories of the research participants, as discussed in section 5.2.5 above. The first category is the EPWP workers, the second includes government officials, and the last category is key community informants.

The primary aim of this study was to critically examine and evaluate the role of the EPWP in contributing to service delivery and livelihoods of rural communities in South Africa. This aim was captured under these three broad objectives:

- 1) To understand the impact of the assets created through EPWP in service delivery and the livelihoods of communities.
- 2) To establish the contribution of the Programme to individual participants.
- 3) To assess the Programme's implementation challenges and how they can be addressed.

For the researcher to achieve the key objectives of this study, there were critical questions to be answered grouped under three broad themes, as outlined below:

- 1) How did the EPWP, as a PEP, contribute to the *delivery of public services in rural areas*?
- 2) In what way were the *livelihoods of the beneficiaries or employees* of the EPWP affected by the Programme?
- 3) What were the *implementation challenges*, if any, of the EPWP as a PEP, and how can they be addressed or improved?

6.1 Data Analysis and Discussion Approach

As alluded to in Chapter 5 (section 5.2.8) above, the data analysis for this study followed a thematic approach, explained by Braun and Clarke (2006) as focused mainly on scrutinising the data collected and identifying emerging themes and patterns in it. To ensure one arrives at the ultimate theme for each set of data, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006:18), six-phased thematic analysis was followed, particularly for the focus group discussions. This required the researcher to sufficiently familiarise himself with the collected data, code and classify the data based on the responses received and then generate themes using the codes created from the data. Note that this was not a once-off process. The next step was to review the themes, define and name them, where necessary, and lastly, write up the analysis, as it is done in this chapter.

As indicated above, the study results are aggregated according to the categories of research

participants. This section consists of three broad areas in terms of the analysis and discussion of the study results, in line with the research objectives. The first part focuses on the analysis and discussion of the results from the first category of research participants. They include the EPWP participants, who are also referred to as EPWP workers. These are the workers who were employed or currently still working in the Programme. This is followed by the analysis and discussion of the results for the second category of research participants, who are officials, managers and coordinators of the EPWP in municipalities and government departments targeted for this study. The third and final part of this section focuses on the analysis and discussion of the results for the third category of research participants, who are community informants, including local ward councillors, ward committee members, school principals, local business leaders, and other prominent persons in the community.

To discuss the study results, Programme Theory Evaluation (PTE), discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.2), as well the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.1), were used as the theoretical frameworks. Theoretical frameworks are referred to by Somekh and Lewin (2011) as combinations of concepts incorporated around a principal theme to form a foundation to support the theory. This study was, therefore, anchored by these two theoretical frameworks.

6.1.1 EPWP Workers: Category 1

Out of the three categories of research participants for this study discussed in section 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 above, these results are for the first category made up of workers in the EPWP projects across the provinces targeted for this study. These research participants are also commonly known or referred to as beneficiaries or participants of EPWP projects. The objective was to establish the contribution of the Programme to individual EPWP participants or workers.

The sample for this category included 32 participants. However, due to the sampling strategy (snowballing) adopted for this category of participants, data saturation point was reached after 25 participants (78%) were interviewed and, therefore, the researcher did not continue with the remaining participants. For this category of participants, one-on-one interviews were conducted using prearranged questions. In analysing the responses for this category of participants, themes were formulated informed by the questions asked to the participants. Ten themes were identified, analysed and discussed in the next section in the following order: 1) demographic factors and employment duration; 2) the rate of pay and form of payment; 3) further education and training attained; 4) supporting families; 5) psychological and emotional factors; 6) well-being and food security; 7) securing shelter, renovations and home appliances; 8) improved income; 9) improved social networks and support; and 10) high costs and employment duration.

6.1.1.1 Demographics and Employment Duration

Out of the 25 EPWP workers interviewed, 18 (72%) were females, seven (28%) were males, and 11 (44%) were youths between 18 and 35 years of age. The number of female participants compares well with the EPWP target for women, as reflected in the EPWP Phase IV Business Plan, which is set at 55% (EPWP, 2019). Based on these results, the Programme surpassed its target for female participants by 17% of the sampled participants. This is a positive reflection on the Programme, since women are a more vulnerable group in society, as noted by Crous (2017) and StatsSA (2021), who show that women are prone to poverty more compared to men, and more than 65% of women are likely to live in poverty compared to their male counterparts. These authors went further and revealed that one in every three women lived in poverty in South Africa and one in every two single mothers

also live in poverty in South Africa in 2019. Therefore, achieving the targets for women participants in the EPWP becomes critical in reducing poverty and improving livelihoods, particularly for women as a more vulnerable and marginalised group in society. These results are also consistent with the recommendation by Devereux and Solomon (2006), who suggested that for meeting the target for the number of females, a conscious and deliberate must be made by programme implementers to encourage and reach women participants.

However, the same could not be said with regards to the youth target. According to the EPWP Phase IV Business Plan, the Programme aimed to involve 60% youth in its projects (EPWP, 2019), yet in the sampled projects, only 44% of participants were youths. This is a worrisome outcome, considering the current youth unemployment rate in the country, as reported by StatsSA (2021) to be at 63.3% for the youth using the expanded definition and 43.6% using the narrow definition.

In terms of employment duration in the EPWP projects, out of 25 participants sampled, six (24%) had more than 10 years employed in the Programme, with the longest-serving participant being with the EPWP for more than 18 years. Eight participants, representing 32% of the total sample, had more than three years employed in the Programme, while nine participants, representing 36%, had worked in the Programme for more than two years. Only three participants, equivalent to 12%, indicated their employment duration in the Programme was between zero and six months.

It is worth noting that 24% of participants had been involved in the Programme for more than 10 years. This resonates with the assertion by made by McCord (2005) that in South Africa, some programmes have been able to provide sustained, longer-duration employment. Key among those was the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme, as opposed to the short-term nature of employment in most PWP. This raises many questions, such as whether this shouldn't be regarded as a "make-work" programme, instead of employment creation and genuinely adding to the livelihoods of the participants and community at large. However, having workers involved in the Programme for more than 10 years could reflect sustainability and predictability of income compared to short-term employment.

6.1.1.2 Rate of Pay and Form of Payment

All the EPWP workers interviewed indicated that they were paid in cash for the work performed. Even though there was no clear policy from the EPWP on the form of payment for workers, i.e., whether the payment is in cash, in kind or both. These results are consistent with the general practice in many other PEPs implemented globally in which workers are paid in cash. There were other PEPs whose workers are paid in kind (i.e. food) instead of cash for the work performed, such as Bangladesh's Food for Work (FFW) Programme and Nepal's Rural Community Infrastructure Works (RCIW) discussed in Chapter 2. But what was important with these two programmes was the objectives that they were set up for, which was to "reduce hunger and improve food security", as noted by the World Bank (2015:18) and Rubaba et al. (2019:2). The other programmes such as the EPWP had broader objectives than improving food security, for example, "to provide work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through the delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development" (EPWP, 2019:28). According Austen (2015:38), Somalia's Cash for Work (CFW) Programme aimed to "Develop and replenish depleted community and households assets". Looking at these objectives, they go beyond just food security, and they include income support and development.

When it comes to the rate of pay, the EPWP wage rate is regulated by Ministerial Determination 4:

EPWP 2012 (Government of South Africa, 2012) and the 2018 NMW Act, as amended (Government of South Africa, 2018). This legislation sets out the wage floor for all EPWP workers. The EPWP workers interviewed provided mixed responses on the rate of pay they receive per month from the Programme and on the scale they were provided. Out of 25 workers, 11 (44%) indicated that their wage rate was between R600 and R1 000, and the majority of these workers were not shy to disclose their rate of pay. They did this voluntarily, citing that this rate is generally known for their programme. They indicated that they were receiving R700 per month, as they only worked twice per week, with eight regulated hours per day. Nine (36%) workers indicated that they received between R1 100 and R2 000 per month, while three (12%) indicated that they received between R2 100 and R3 000, and the remaining two (8%) indicated that they receive between R3 100 and R4 000 per month.

According to the Government of South Africa (2012:11; 2018:4), the minimum wage rate for the EPWP worker is R11.93 per hour, which translates to R95.44 per day, as the regulated working hours per day is eight. In a week, the wage rate is R477.20. This, therefore, means the legislated monthly wage rate for EPWP workers is R1 908.80 per month. These results indicate that 20 (80%) of the interviewed workers were paid less than the regulated minimum wage. This is a concerning finding concerning a government programme not complying with government legislation on minimum wage, especially when one also considers the objectives of the Programme to alleviate poverty and contribute to development.

The low wage rate is one issue that the workers emphasised for government to consider. One participant said:

The wage received from the Programme is not sufficient and it has not increased for the past two years. If the Department can assist and increase our wage rate to cope with the increase in food price levels.

Another participant said:

The money we receive I appreciate, but I humb[ly] appeal to the Department to consider increasing our wage. As [a] diabetic person, I have to make some very difficult choices on whether to reduce the groceries and buy medication. These are all important to me. It's not a matter of either or. These items are not substitutes.

These responses indicate that the workers appreciate the Programme and find it useful; however, the low wage rate which has not been adjusted, is the major setback for the Programme and this was viewed as government contravening its legislations. According to the Government of South Africa (2012:11), "The EPWP worker may not be paid less than the minimum wage rate" and it further states that the wage rate "be adjusted annually from the 1st of November". As the custodian of legislation and implementer of the EPWP, government should lead by example and comply with its legislation.

Wage is one of the key sustainable livelihoods assets (financial capital) to "overcome stress and shocks" (Mubangizi, 2020). Furthermore, Zimmermann (2014) cautioned that the payment of participants should not be very low, as it defeats the very purpose of the Programme. Instead, a balance in terms of wage rate must be created. Therefore, paying a below-standard wage rate is counterproductive by the state because it thwarts the very objective of providing work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people, thereby improving their livelihoods.

But, generally, all (100%) of the interviewed participants noted that the Programme improved their income levels, particularly since all of them, when they joined the Programme, were unemployed and had zero income. Therefore, any positive change in the income level is a welcomed change. Income support forms part of the objectives of the EPWP. These results when assessed in the with the PTE discussed in Chapter 3 (figure 7), clearly showed how the programme gave rise to the intended or observed outcomes. Some of the interviewed participants said:

I have been working in the Programme for the past 17 years. This is the sole source of income for me.

My income level increased by R3 000 from zero as I was unemployed before joining the Programme.

Improving well-being in terms of sustainable livelihoods and financial capital is a critical livelihood asset to have, as noted by Serrat (2017). Access to stable and predictable income provides an opportunity for one to plan and enter into longer-term financial obligations aimed to improve one's well-being. The opportunity for these interviewed workers to make longer-term financial commitments increased, as reflected on by one participant who indicated that he used lay by to buy the fence for his garden and paid monthly instalments until it was fully paid. Another one said that because of the employment contract she had, she was able to apply for a bank loan to renovate her house. Having access to stable and predictable income paved the way for these workers to further engage in other livelihood activities to improve their well-being and overcome the stress and shocks of poverty that interrupted an otherwise steady livelihood and to improve the general well-being of the workers and their families. These results support the contention by McNamara (2013) and Mubangizi (2020), who hold that for a livelihood to be sustainable, it requires characteristics that ensure it is able to deal with the stresses and shockwaves brought by the environment as well as the ability to bounce back from them.

Despite the acknowledgement of the improved income levels, more than 25% (seven) participants cited transport costs as the major setback to their income levels. These interviewed participants pointed out that they spent close to 40% of their income on transport costs because their sites are far from where they live. One participant said:

The biggest challenge is that in our programme we are not working closer to home, you have to use the same money for transportation, two single trips per day. A lot goes to the transport fee.

Assigning workers to projects closer to their place of residence is one important criteria in the selection of EPWP workers, as per the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines of 2018 (EPWP 2017) and the Government of South Africa (2012) states that: "Workers of the EPWP projects should be locally-based (as close to the project site as possible)". This criterion was introduced specifically to ensure that workers, if practically possible, could walk to their project sites and don't spend money on transportation to guarantee that their income is spent on the household and personal needs. Working closer to home was also found to be critical by Hartwig (2013) and Lavers (2016) in the Rwanda Vision 2020 *Umurenge* Programme to ensure an increase in the participation of women. The concern of high transportation costs for workers whose projects are far from their place of residence is self-defeating for the Programme, considering that the wage rate is still very low, and it was set up with this principle of working closer to home and no transportation was factored in. As discussed above, with the very low wage rate (according to the Government of South Africa (2012:11; 2018:4), the

minimum wage rate for an EPWP worker is R11.93 per hour, which translates to R95.44 per day), some programmes still pay below the regulated rate, as noted in section 6.1.1.2. This is non-compliant with the legislation and the Programme guidelines compound this problem.

6.1.1.3 Further Education and Training Attained

Education and training are some of the key achievements registered by workers interviewed in terms of how the Programme contributed to their livelihoods. The contribution of the Programme to education came at two levels: 1) directly, with a participant attaining education from or through the Programme; and 2) indirectly, with parents or siblings paying for education through the money received from the Programme. One participant who directly attained further education through the EPWP said: “I was able to register for [a] public management short course and paid for my transport costs from the stipend I received”. Another participant said:

Part of the wage that I am receiving, I am saving it for my education. My contract is ending in July 2021. I will be having sufficient registration fee to Durban University of Technology. I am planning to start in the next semester.

Besides attaining further education through the wage received from the Programme, more than 90% (23) of the interviewed workers received some form of training, either formal or informal, directly from the Programme and aligned with the work they were doing and/or as additional training to improve their chances of finding jobs after they left the Programme. This is consistent with the assertion in the EPWP Mid-Term Review (EPWP, 2008) as well as McCord (2005) and Lal et al. (2010), who noted that training and skills development within the EPWP has a great potential to increase employability of the project participants after they exit the Programme, and that there should be accredited training linked to exit opportunities provided to Programme participants. These are some of the other responses made by interviewees:

With the training I received, I am able to sew items for my community and generate additional income.

I did not have these skills before. I am able to do my job properly and also use my skills to get piece jobs in my community. People hire me to do carpentry or paving in their homes. My skills assist me to survive and earn a living.

On the other hand, there were interviewees who did not directly attain education through the Programme but used the money received from it to finance the education of their children or their siblings. These are some of the responses received from these research participants:

Today, my children are in Grade 12 [and] supported by the money I receive from the programme. I am a single parent with six children and four grandchildren.

My two daughters are at university. Even though they get NSFAS to support them, but every month, I am able to share with them the little that I receive from the Programme. It makes me feel very good that I do provide for my kids, little as it may be, but I know it goes a long way [for] my children.

Contributions to education and skills development are another critical component of sustainable

livelihood assets (human capital). The attainment or improvement of human capital has a positive relationship with the improvement of livelihoods. As noted by Sati (2014:12), a sustainable livelihood is largely dependent on “the availability of assets/livelihood capital”, which are “human capital, natural capital, financial capital and physical capital”. These results signal that workers in the EPWP or their family members improved their education and developed their skills, directly and indirectly, thereby enhancing their capabilities and human capital assets, through which they are able to make and sustain their living.

6.1.1.4 Supporting Families with Basic Necessities

Supporting families was the most popular theme that came out from the responses of the interviewees on how the Programme assisted them. This came in various forms, but the most prevalent support was the provision of food. With the high levels of poverty and unemployment, food security is at the core of PEP objectives. McCord (2005) asserted that PWP's have become an important and widely used social protection tool during prolonged and severe periods of poverty and unemployment. All interviewed EPWP workers unanimously said that the Programme has provided great relief in terms of food security to them and their families. The majority of the interviewed participants indicated that they were the only breadwinners in their households, and sometimes they supplement their income with a child support grant or through piece jobs they perform in their communities to support their families further.

Looking at the examples of various PEPs discussed in Chapter 2 – such as the *Bolsa Verde* Programme in Brazil, whose objectives were the transfer of income and advancement of the lives of families and households living in extreme poverty in the country (World Without Poverty, 2017); the PK Programme of Indonesia, whose objectives were to transfer income, reduce poverty and increase food security to the impoverished communities in the Country, as Devereux and Solomon (2006) convey; the FFW Programme in Bangladesh; Ethiopian's Safety Net Programme; and Somalia's CFW Programme – ensuring food security and reducing starvation formed part of the objectives of these programmes. Based on the responses from participants, the EPWP contributed to reducing hunger and poverty for the workers and their families, as reflected in some of the responses below from the workers:

We are a family of 13, some of the members are kids who attend school. No one is working in this family. The money I received from the Programme and the one I received when I got piece jobs in my community is the money that sustain[s] this family. I buy food, school uniform[s] and Christmas clothes for my kids, all through this money, and no one is going to bed on an empty stomach anymore in my family.

I am no longer dependent on neighbours and relatives to support and provide food for my family.

I am now able to [cover] basic needs for me and my family, such as mealie meal, soup and other food items which are important for our day-to-day survival. I am the head of the household. Being a single mother means you need to be able to respond to all the needs of your family. We are a family of nine, and there is no one working. We survive through piece jobs and the stable income received from the Programme. I have been part of the Programme for more than 15 years. The Programme has sustained me.

The money I receive from the Programme helps in buying grocer[ies] for my family. I live with my children and grandchildren, who also receive the kids support grant. So my income and the kid's social grant play a big role in supporting my family.

Supporting families with basic necessities was the most prevalent theme mentioned by these research participants. However, this was not a surprise considering that the majority of the workers interviewed were females (18, or 72%). These findings are supported by the study of Zelizer (2011), which found that men spend disproportionately on their families compared to women, with females spending more than their male counterparts on their families. Furthermore, these findings also show that the EPWP responds to one of its objectives as a poverty alleviation programme and provides income support to the poor and unemployed people.

One striking point that also came out from the interviewees' responses was the Programme's ability to replace income loss when a family member is no longer able to provide for various reasons (such as death, health and old age). That member is replaced by someone from the same household to ensure the continued flow of income. One participant said:

I took over from my parents, who have both passed away. We are 13 at home and I am the eldest daughter. I have to look after my siblings and my sister's child, who also passed away since my parents have passed away. We are all dependent on this money for our daily survival.

This feature of the Programme speaks directly to the transforming structures and processes in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, particularly laws and policies that allow flexibility, focusing on the well-being of the family as a whole and not only the individual. This further speaks directly on how the programme processes and outcomes as shown in the Program Theory Evaluation (PTE) are yielding these intended outcomes to the programme beneficiaries, the flexibility in the programme directly links to how the processes are being used in driving the programme's impact as envisaged in the PTE. The flexibility in the Programme design ensures that the objectives continue to be met. Because if a poor household has lost a member and there are no processes and mechanisms to ensure that the household is protected from falling back to poverty, the purpose of the EPWP would be defeated.

6.1.1.5 Promotion of Psychological and Emotional Wellbeing

The study findings indicated that 100% of the interviewed EPWP workers found the Programme to have positively contributed to their psychological and/or emotional well-being. This emanates from the fact that all these workers were unemployed before joining the Programme and their lives and that of their families were in a very bad state, which affected them emotionally and psychologically.

One interviewed participant said:

My life was so difficult. I never felt that hopeless and helpless as a man, seeing my kids and my wife in such conditions, and it broke my heart every day. At times, because I am a person who likes to go to church, I had to tie my shoes with wire the way they were so torn. When I arrive at church, I would hide them and walked with socks. People used to think there was something wrong with me. When we take transport home, I would [take] off my shoes because they might damage people's clothes with the wires. I was so ashamed of myself.

Another interviewee said:

I was unemployed, had no money, always stress[ed] about how to support my family, [and] where the next meal is going to come from for my family. As a woman, if you can't provide for your family, you get undermined by the neighbours, and you lose your confidence as a mother.

But after joining the Programme, the interviewees praised the EPWP for changing and improving their psychological and emotional well-being. As noted by Serrat (2017), achieving a positive state of psychological and emotional well-being forms an important part of achieving beneficial livelihoods outcomes, particularly reducing emotional vulnerability. This is supported by the assertion by Abbott et al. (2008:2), who argue that prolonged negative psychological and emotional problems disrupt the individual's capabilities to function normally in their daily life. Therefore, by addressing the negative psychological and emotional issues of the EPWP workers, the Programme improves participants' ability to carry on with their daily lives more normally. This is evidenced by participants who said:

Psychologically and emotionally, I am much better. I am now even able to work with pride in the village. My health has improved. I am no longer dependent on neighbours and relatives to support and provide food for my family.

Things have changed now. I am able to meet with women of the village. My confidence has improved and dignity restored, because I am now able to provide for my family.

These responses by research participants support the views of Abbott et al. (2008:2), who contend that psychological and emotional well-being are about one's life progressing well. This state includes one feeling good as well as operating effectively. The state of feeling good goes beyond the simple positive feelings of joy and satisfaction. It includes feelings such as self-confidence and of being loved and appreciated. All these feelings are critical for one to build self-control and develop a sense of purpose in one's life. This clearly shows that in dealing with the psychology of poverty and unemployment, there are many underlying factors that the Programme is addressing by providing employment opportunities. It brings back confidence, dignity, a sense of purpose, and satisfaction to the workers.

6.1.1.6 Securing Shelter, Home Renovations, Home Appliances and Electronics

In the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, shelter forms part of the five key livelihood assets (physical assets), which are critical for creating better livelihood outcomes. As noted by Sati and Vangchhia (2016), this means that a programme must "improve the means of living". More than 70% (18) of the interviewed participants indicated that the Programme assisted them in improving their shelter in different ways and forms, such as building new structures, renovations, and repairing their homes. These results are consistent with the demographics of the participants, where 56% were those above 35 years old, and 44% were youths below 35 years of age. However, what makes this percentage (70%) of interviewed participants even higher, is because there were those participants younger than 35 years of age, yet they were heads of their households (as outlined in the EPWP objectives that another primary target for the Programme is youth-headed households), and as such, their income was also used in securing or improving their homes. Some interviewed participants said:

I used to buy a bag of cement every month to make bricks. I have now completed my three-roomed, fully built [house] with the income from the Programme. I now have dignity, as we used to share the same room with my children and others [who] are now old.

Through this money, I bought [a] fence and fenced my house and my garden to ensure that livestock from the neighbours do not destroy my garden and produce. I used to lay by the fence and pay monthly until it was fully paid.

I applied for the bank loan because I had predictable income and bought building material. I am now repaying the bank and staying in my house because I used to stay in a shack with my kids.

Judging from the responses from these participants, securing shelter was a major step towards achieving improved livelihood outcomes and the means of living. This is further supported by Sati (2014:25) and Sati and Vangchhia (2016), who attest that PEPs “are considered a strategy to achieve the livelihood outcomes”, and they further noted that “increasing well-being includes various factors such as reducing vulnerability of the poor households”. The EPWP forms part of the transforming structure and process in the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, as a government strategy to reduce poverty and unemployment. Through this process, jobs are created, income is transferred, and the workers use their income to build or improve their houses. This is important physical capital attained through the Programme to improve the means of living and livelihood outcomes of the EPWP participants.

While the majority (70%) of the interview participants spent a sizeable portion of their income on building and renovating their homes, buying of home appliances, furniture and other personal items besides food was another key area that all participants positively responded on, irrespective of their age group. Some interviewed participants said:

I never had a bed of my own, but through the Programme wage, I was able to buy myself a bed, a radio as well the electric kettle for my family.

I bought my bed and the fridge for the family.

But when it comes to personal items, the majority of the youths (more than 80%) indicated that part of their income was used to buy cellphones. Again, this is not a new phenomenon, as indicated by Vaidya et al. (2016) that the use of cellphone technologies is credited for its ability to bring the world together due to the convenience it provides in communication and interaction between people across the world through calling, texting, and Internet connection, such as social media and others. This study by Vaidya et al. (2016:6) revealed that young people between the ages of 15 and 25 are the majority of cellphone and smartphone technology users. But besides that, both cellphones and smartphones are very important tools used to communicate in this modern era.

The interviewed participants cited that the key usage of their mobile devices included submitting employment applications and curriculum vitae (CVs), communicating with potential clients for those who were looking for piece jobs in their communities, as well as engaging with groups as part of social networking. Cellphones have become important devices in human lives in this modern era. This is no coincidence that the EPWP workers, both young and old, were also spending their money on these devices for various reasons, as noted by another participant, who said:

My cellphone is the point of contact. All my clients and potential clients already have my number. Sometimes I don't even know where they get my number, I just get a call.

Achieving livelihood outcomes, as noted by Sati (2014:12), depends on the availability of assets and livelihood capital. The interviewed workers in the EPWP managed to improve critical livelihood assets: shelter (physical capital) and other physical assets acquired, such as cellphones. Phones also played an important role in improving their well-being on two fronts, further improving their social capital by: a) increasing connecting with friends and families, even if they are far, which contributes to the improvement in their social networks; and b) connecting them with their clients or potential employers. Vaidya et al. (2016) revealed that cellphones bring the world together, due to the convenience they provide in communication and interaction between people across the world. As indicated above by another interviewee, he sometimes receives calls from strangers asking them him to come and perform some piece jobs.

6.1.1.7 Improved Social Networks and Support

Elasha et al. (2005) defined “livelihoods” as all forms of actions, privileges and possessions, including assets that people use to make a living. In this taxonomy, assets are not defined by only looking at their natural or biological features, such as water and land. Assets include social components, such as family, social networks, participation, and human capital, including knowledge and talents. 100% of the interviewed participants credited the Programme with improving their social network and support. This social network and support came in various forms. For example, 44% (11) of interviewed participants indicated that they have established their social clubs, while the remaining 56% (14) said that even though they do not belong to any social club, they have established stronger bonds and relationships with their fellow employees. Through these relationships and bonds established, the participants could socialise as human beings and share ideas and personal experiences in general. One participant explained:

I am getting to know other people, sharing my experience and learning from them as well, but most importantly, knowing that I am not alone if I come across some challenges.

Another added:

The Programme has provided an opportunity for me to meet other like-minded men and women, interact with them, [and] share ideas and life experiences. We talk about [a] whole lot of things as colleagues, from household, men issues, social events, about the country and everything that is happening in our country politically, socially, economical[ly], and the health matters pertaining the Covid-19 pandemic.

Another participant said, “I have started paying my lobola [for] my fiancée I met in the Programme”. These workers have formed their own community and support structures for one another to improve their social well-being. These social networks assist them in dealing with life shocks and stresses. As noted by Gilbert (2019), cited in Pillay, Ruggunan and Leask (2021), human beings by nature long for connection and feelings of being accepted, cared for, and knowing that there is support available and someone who will be there for you during times of need. This gives comfort, validation, and a sense of belonging and self-worth. In other words, it gives them the feeling of not being alone in whatever challenges they go through. Furthermore, Berkman and Syme, (1979) and Ruberman,

Weinblatt, Goldberg and Chaudhary, (1984) both cited by Pillay et al. (2021), also contended that studies have shown that a community in the form of social network offers a shield to its members and those “people with social support are happier, live longer and have significantly less mental and physical health issues”. The results of this study supported these assertions as the Programme helped improve social support and social networks for the interviewed participants, and this is a direct consequence of the improvement in social capital as one of the key sustainable livelihood assets in enhancing the well-being of the EPWP participants.

Interviewed participants who formed social clubs and stokvels (savings clubs) also said they are a vehicle for members to pull their financial resources together in order to support one another and improve their well-being and thereby contribute to improved livelihoods. Some remarked that they save this money and split it at the end of the year, and this helps members to buy something of higher value, which would not have been possible if there was no club, or they give members loans or rotate payments. Others expressed that they have established burial societies to support members during times of need. This has been helpful, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. One participant stated that:

I am a member of a burial society club. Already I have two deaths in the family. This money and the group of ladies from the society helped a lot during the funeral preparations. I was also able to buy food during the times of need like this.

These findings affirm the study by Lavers (2016:51), which revealed that by “reducing social shocks and stress, social networks provide a cushion and protection to such disturbances and blows”. In improving the well-being of the participants and their livelihoods, social clubs and networks have proved to be shock absorbers for their members during times of distress and anxiety and they contributed to improving the well-being of the members.

6.1.1.8 High Costs and Employment Duration

Conceptually, PEPs are designed to target and benefit local labourers. According to Ministerial Determination 4 on the EPWP Code of Good Practice, “workers of the EPWP projects should be locally-based (as close to the project site as possible)” (Government of South Africa, 2012). This principle was introduced specifically to ensure that workers, as practically possible, walk to their project sites and don’t spend money on transportation to guarantee that their income is spent on household and personal needs.

Contrary to the assertion by these legislative frameworks guiding the implementation of EPWP, more than 25% (7) of the workers reported having to travel long distances and some had to catch two taxis to reach their place of work. This was regarded by many of them as a major setback, considering that their wages are set with this principle of working closer to home and seldomly needing transportation services.

The decision by authorities to employ workers and assign them to sites far from their place of residence came at a high cost. This decision did not add the needed value to the workers’ lives. Instead, it frustrated workers because they had to wake up very early in the morning and travel far to ensure that they arrive at work on time. These workers return very late to their homes, yet there is little to show in terms of value for money, as they spent almost half their wages on transport costs. This decision is what McCord (2005:18) referred to as “make work” programmes, instead of

employment creation and genuinely adding to the improvement in the livelihoods of the participants. Half of the wage being spent on transport is not contributing to providing sufficient social protection and improving the livelihoods of participants. This view was further supported by Devereux and Solomon (2006), who maintain that the impact and the success of a programme are fundamental functions of good programme design. These authors further uphold that the design choices, such as community targeting, labour recruitment and institutional capacity to coordinate the programme, are critical for successful implementation and achievement of the intended outcomes.

Working closer to home was also identified as critical by Hartwig (2013) and Lavers (2016) in the Rwanda VUP to ensure the increased participation of women. The concerns of high transportation costs for workers whose projects are far from their place of residence is self-defeating for the Programme, considering that the wage rate is still very low, and it was set up with this principle of working closer to home and no transportation was factored in.

The other point raised with great concern by participants, especially those who were not part of the Zibambe Programme, was that the duration of employment was shorter, considering the high unemployment rate in the country. One participant said, “When the projects end, it simply means we are all going back to poverty and unemployment”. This response supports the recommendations made by McCord (2005) that to improve the livelihood of participants and address chronic poverty and unemployment, the state must ensure ongoing PWPs and increase the wage rate to address poverty and inequality.

Increased wage rate was another key point raised by the research participants, as noted in 6.1.1.2 above. 20 (80%) of the interviewed workers were paid less than the regulated minimum wage. One of the main pleas by the interviewed participants was to increase their wage rate, as some indicated that for the past two to three years, they have never received any increase, yet the price levels of basic food stuffs increases all the time. One participant pleaded:

The wage we received from the Programme is not sufficient and it has not increased for the past two years. If the Department can assist and increase our wage rate to cope with the increase in food price levels.

Another added:

The wage rate has remained unchanged for far too long, yet the prices of basic food stuff[s] increased regularly. It is even worse during the period of Covid-19, where you find price changes every day in shops.

Listening closely to these responses indicates that the participants who raised the challenge of the wage rate appreciate the intervention by government, but they appealed to the government to consider increasing the wage rate. One interviewed participant stated:

The money we receive I appreciate, but I humb[ly] appeal to the Department to consider increasing our wage. As [a] diabetic person, I have to make some very difficult choices on whether to reduce the groceries and buy medication. These are all important to me. It's not a matter of either or. These items are not substitutes. With the little wage, I find myself [at] this crossroad.

These results resonate with the recommendations by McCord (2005) that to improve livelihoods and

well-being of the participants, wage rates must be improved. In this case, this is even more compelling, since more than 80% of the interviewed participants were paid less the regulated minimum wage. As the custodian of legislation, and implementer of the EPWP, the state must lead by complying with its legislation to contribute in addressing poverty, unemployment and inequality.

6.1.1.9 Summary of the Themes and Key Findings from EPWP Workers' Interviews

The analysis and discussions concentrated on the main themes informed by the questions asked to the EPWP Workers during one-on-one interviews. These themes have been graphically represented in Figure 9 below.

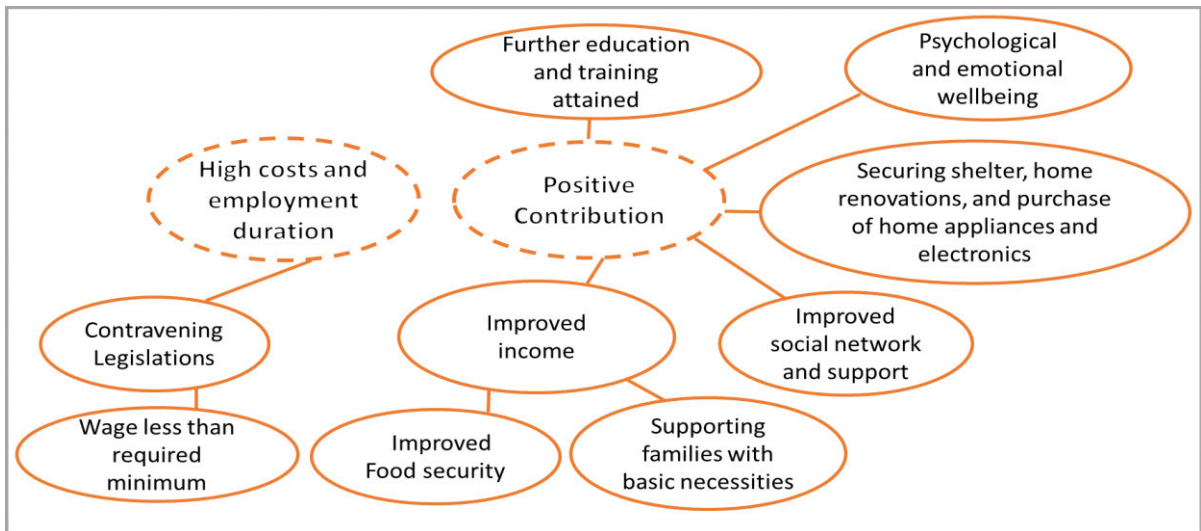


Figure 9: Graphical representation of emerging themes: EPWP workers

This subsection first looked at the demographics and employment duration of the workers of the Programme, which revealed that the majority (72%) are females, which corresponds well with the EPWP gender target. The remaining 28% were males, while 44% constituted youths between 18-35 years of age. There is an under-achievement in terms of the 60% youth target, and this is concerning considering the current youth unemployment rate in the country, as reported by StatsSA (2021) to be 63.3%.

In terms of employment duration in the EPWP projects, the majority (36%) of the interviewed participants worked in the Programme for more than two years, while 32% worked in the Programme for more than three years. On the other hand, 24% of the interviewed participants worked in the Programme for more than 10 years, and the remaining 12% attested to have worked in the Programme for less than six months. These results show that the majority of the participants have worked for more than two years, with the longest-serving member having worked for 18 years in the Programme.

As noted above, one of the objectives of this study was to assess and establish the contribution of the Programme to individual EPWP participants or workers. To achieve that, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was used to frame this study and questions were posed to the research participants along the five key Sustainable Livelihoods Framework assets, among other areas. The study revealed various areas where the EPWP contributed to improving the livelihoods of the participants. This is summarised below and is linked to Figure 9 above:

- **Human capital:** Participants expressed the attainment of education and training as one of the key achievements (direct and indirect benefits). As one participant indicated, through the income received from the Programme, he registered for a short course, another used the skills training he received to get other job opportunities in the community. Some were already using sewing and plumbing skills, for example, to generate income in their communities.
- **Financial capital:** There was great appreciation from the research participants concerning their access to income, which is another important asset within the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Through the income received, participants indicated that they are now able to fulfil other needs, such as food security. Financial capital thus contributed to improving physical capital assets.
- **Physical capital:** Through the income received from the Programme in the form of wages, the participants were able to acquire and improve their physical capital, such as by renovating their homes, fencing their gardens, and buying furniture and other home necessities.
- **Social capital:** This improves the psycho-social well-being of an individual, which is important in human resources. The study indicated that 100% of the interviewed EPWP workers found the Programme positively contributed to their psychological and/or emotional well-being. This emanates from the fact that all these workers were unemployed before joining the Programme and their lives and that of their families were in a very bad state, which affected them emotionally and psychologically. As one interviewee stated, his life was so difficult, and he felt hopeless and helpless as a man when seeing his children and his wife in such conditions. It broke his heart every day, and he felt so ashamed of himself. But after joining the Programme, their situation changed for the better. Their psychological, social and emotional well-being improved. As noted by Serrat (2017), achieving a positive state of psychological and emotional well-being forms an important part of achieving good livelihood outcomes, particularly by reducing emotional vulnerability.
- **Natural capital:** This refers to stocks of natural assets, such as land, plants and other living things. During the interviews, none of the participants indicated the acquisition and attainment of natural capital through income from the EPWP. This is mainly attributed to the problem that the income they receive is not sufficient to cover other needs beyond those stated above. This would suggest that asset contributions may not develop long-term intergenerational financial security.

6.1.2 Government Officials: Category 2

The second category of research participants interviewed were government officials, including managers, coordinators or champions of the EPWP responsible for the coordination and/or implementation of the Programme from the 10 key departments and eight municipalities targeted for this study, as discussed in section 5.2.5 (sample size) above.

The interviews for this category of participants were conducted through focus group discussions, as explained earlier in sections 5.2.5 and 5.2.6. However, in cases where an identified research participant could not form part of the focus group discussion, since the sampling strategy for this group was purposive, non-probability sampling, the researcher was flexible and accommodated that participant through a one-on-one interview using the same pre-written questions used in the focus group discussions. With this category of research participants, the objective was to establish how the EPWP contributed to the delivery of public services in rural areas and assess the implementation challenges and how they could be addressed.

A total of 38 officials were interviewed from this second category of research participants. The sample for this category was 38 participants, but to reach this number, invitations were sent to 45 officials, and the response rate was thus 84%. This responsive rate was boosted by the greater availability of officials who were at home due to the Covid-19 lockdown conditions, as well as the approach employed to conduct the focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews online.

In analysing the data for this category of research participants, a thematic approach was used as mentioned above and 11 themes were identified. These are analysed and discussed in the next sections in the following order: 1) demographic information and position in the organisation; 2) interference and lack of transparency in the recruitment of workers; 3) financial and human resources; 4) planning and stakeholder engagements; 5) compliance with Programme regulations and procedures; 6) Programme understanding and commitment; 7) youth participation; 8) overarching policy and enforcement mechanisms; 9) wage rates inconsistency and payment delays; 10) management and keeping of project records; and 11) mechanisms to address the implementation challenges. This is followed by a conclusion of the analysis of government officials' results.

6.1.2.1 Demographic Information, Position and Experience

Out of the 38 officials interviewed, 23 (61%) are males and 15 (39%) are females. In terms of seniority in their respective departments, 12 (32%) out of 38 indicated that they were senior managers, while 21 (55%), and five (13%) said they were middle managers and practitioners, respectively. 11 (29%) indicated that they had more than 15 years of experience in the EPWP, while nine (24%) said that they had between 10 and 14 years of experience. Eight (21%) stated that they had between six and nine years of experience, and the remaining 10 (26%) had between one and five years in the Programme.

These figures clearly illustrate that the majority of the officials interviewed were males, more than 80% of them were in management positions, and almost a third were in senior management. This was critical in getting diverse views, rather than focusing on one single group. These figures also demonstrated that the majority (more than 50%) of the interviewed officials had been involved in the Programme for more than 10 years. This was important for a study of this nature as it provided in-depth information in terms of inputs and views from this category of participants. But what was equally important was the mix between those who had been involved in the Programme for a longer period with those who had just joined, which helped to get more balanced views and different perspectives, compared to having one segment of participants giving their viewpoints. Therefore, the 26% of the officials with one to five years' experience in the Programme helped to provide that balance.

6.1.2.2 Interference and Lack of Transparency in Recruitment of Workers

Recruitment of the EPWP workers is one of the critical processes in the implementation of the Programme and this process is identified as a significant activity in PTE which forms part of the theoretical framework for this study discussed in section 3.2 above. As noted by Rogers et al. (2000), PTE contains a clear model of how the Programme gives rise to the intended or observed outcomes. For the EPWP, the predetermined objectives of the Programme were job creation and poverty alleviation, EPWP (2019). As such, recruitment of EPWP workers should give rise to job creation (representing income transferred) and skills transferred through training of the workers, as alluded to in section 6.1.1.3 above, where the contribution to education and skills development also forms a

critical component of the sustainable livelihood assets (human capital), which is another theoretical framework used in this study. Furthermore, poverty alleviation, particularly for the intended beneficiaries of the Programme, which included poor and unemployed women, youths and persons with disabilities, is an important objective the EPWP seeks to achieve.

The study participants provided mixed responses during the discussions on the challenges experienced in the recruitment of EPWP workers, but they were all pointing towards the same direction of a lack of transparency, interference, and disregard for the existing procedures in the recruitment of EPWP workers. There were robust discussions accompanied by frustration from the officials concerning how the established recruitment processes were being undermined and in fact being turned into a political game, where councillors and those with political connections get preference in EPWP employment opportunities. This is despite the fact that in 2017, the DPWI introduced the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines, which aimed to provide direction on the recruitment of workers in EPWP projects. These guidelines should provide uniformity and foster consistency in recruitment. One of the provisions of these guidelines is to ensure fairness, transparency, equity and ethical behaviour (EPWP, 2017b).

Overwhelmingly, the participants asserted that the provisions and principles for recruiting EPWP workers were violated. Councillors rendered the recruitment processes biased and were not conforming to the established principles and guidelines. The main culprits fingered in the flouting of the recruitment processes were ward councillors. Below are some of the responses made by participants:

Community leaders often dictate who should be appointed in the project without following the standardised recruitment guidelines, which promote fair and transparent recruitment of project participants.

Nepotism and partisan[ship] from councillors when it comes to recruitment of EPWP participants at community levels, despite the clear recruitment guidelines provided by National Public Works [Department] on how to go about recruiting EPWP workers.

Recruitment of participants is strongly politicised on the ground. This is mostly led by ward councillors as they are the entry point at community level for all projects implemented in their wards. They tend to abuse their powers and authority and influence the recruitment of the participants in a way that is inconsistent with the recruitment guidelines.

These findings fingered councillors in the contravention of recruitment procedures and rules. This behaviour of councillors as leaders at the community level on behalf of any municipality is inconsistent with the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, as amended and Schedule 1: Code of Conduct for Councillors, which mandates councillors to “(a) Perform the functions of office in good faith, honestly and a transparent manner; and (b) At all times act in the best interest of the municipality and in such a way that the credibility and integrity of the municipality are not compromised”.

Furthermore, Section 11 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors prohibits councillors from participating “in any conduct which would cause or contribute to maladministration in the council”.

It is no doubt that this kind of conduct by local councillors violated the fundamental role of local government as enshrined in Section 152(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

which mandates local government to “provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner”. As further spelt out in the Municipal Structures Act, municipalities must “provide, without favour or prejudice, democratic and accountable government... [and in doing so] a municipality must in the exercise of its executive and legislative authority respect the rights of citizens and those of other persons protected by the Bill of Rights”. The behaviour of councillors further defies the founding rules and policies of the local government, including the Constitution, the Municipal Systems Act, and Municipal Structures Act.

The councillors formed part of the third category of research participants as key community informants. They were asked about these allegations of undermining, interfering and manipulating the recruitment process and they vehemently denied any wrongdoing and improper interference with the recruitment process of the EPWP workers. One councillor went further to refute these allegations and claimed that the recruitment in his ward is done through a Ward Committee. As the Chairperson of the Ward Committee, in terms of Section 72 to 78 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, he must oversee the process, but he has never used his position to influence the recruitment of community members in his ward. He gave examples of the systems they used in his ward and said they use the indigent register when looking for a smaller number of people (fewer than 4). If they are looking for more workers, a “lotto system” or community members are invited to a community meeting through loud hailing and posters. They are then requested to write their identity numbers and put them in a box, and then a draw is conducted. In that case, the ward councillor contended that the process is transparent and fair and cannot be manipulated, as the draws are conducted in full view of community members. He further said the municipality is looking at using an automatic lotto system to ensure no person gets a second opportunity while there are people who have not had a chance in the previous projects.

His assertion refutes bias and interference by politicians in the recruitment of the EPWP workers, at least in his ward, as these officials were also speaking from their own personal experiences.

6.1.2.3 Financial and Human Resources

Financial and human resource capacity was another prominent theme that came out in the focus group discussion with government officials on the Programme implementation challenges. Financial and human resources are also critical Programme inputs outlined in PTE as the theoretical framework for this study. Programme funding is a key input for implementation. No programme can be implemented without funding. In other words, finance is the backbone of any programme if it is to succeed. The majority of the participants during the focus group discussion cited insufficient funding as one of the major challenges affecting the implementation of the EPWP. One participant stated:

Non-availability of funding prohibits the Programme from employing supervisors at project sites to run the day-to-day monitoring and administration of the project at site level.

Another participant added:

Insufficient budget and shortage of material and tools to be used at the project site for household contractors makes work difficult.

These statements generated vigorous discussions among group members regarding insufficient

funding allocated to public bodies implementing EPWP. They pointed out that funding was not sufficient, particularly in rural municipalities, since they do not generate sufficient revenue from services and also considering the community needs and levels of unemployment in the country.

As noted above, financial resources are critical to the Programme's success, as Heradien (2013), citing Rodgers (1983:5), affirmed that programme inputs are key ingredients and determine the intended outcomes and impact of the programme. In other words, whatever you put in the programme, the results will mirror your inputs. In the IT field, they have a specific term for such a relationship called "garbage-in garbage-out".

Despite the majority of participants citing funding as the challenge, the voices of the minority could not be ignored, particularly on the issues that they were raising. A few members of the group indicated that most EPWP implementing bodies focused on the EPWP incentive grant provided by the DPWI as the sole funding for the Programme, yet there were other streams of funding provided by National Treasury, such as equitable shares, municipal infrastructure grants, provincial road maintenance grants, and other grants provided by Treasury.

Therefore, the responses of the majority of participants distorted the picture as if the EPWP employment opportunities must only be implemented using the DPWI incentive grant. Furthermore, there were many EPWP implementing bodies that underspent their allocation, as reflected in the reports by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA, 2020) and National Treasury (2020), showing that underspending by municipalities was sitting at R96.9 billion (20%) of the total adjusted budget for municipalities in the 2019/20 financial year. Reflecting on these reports, the former Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr David Maseko (cited in Mkhwanazi, 2020), reacted and said:

It is not acceptable that you have under-expenditure in this sphere of government when our people need our services. We stand on shaky moral ground on underspending if we are not able to deal with the things that we need to deal with.

Clearly, from the above, funding is an important input in programme implementation as per the PTE. But it was not an issue here; the management of the funds allocated to public bodies implementing the EPWP is the problem. This is contrary to the views raised by the majority of the officials interviewed.

Another key input in the programme implementation, as part of the PTE outlined in Figure 7, is human resources. The majority of the interviewed officials raised insufficient human resources as a major challenge in the implementation of the EPWP. Insufficient human resources in PWP is, firstly, due to an inadequate number of officials responsible for coordinating and implementing the Programme, including supervising the EPWP workers on site. Secondly, there is a lack of available skilled workers for designing and implementing labour-intensive EPWP projects. These results corroborate the assertion by Heradien (2013), citing Kobokane (2007), that inadequate skills for designing, coordination and implementing PEPs is one of the reasons causing programmes to fail or not achieve the intended outcomes. This is what some of the officials said on the issue of human resource capacity:

[There is a] lack of effective supervision of the [Zibambele] programme due to limited staff complement and the number of participants involved in the programme. This affects the programme reporting and results in many audit queries due to [a] lack of POEs [portfolios of evidence] because nobody is overseeing the day-to-day running of the programme at site

level due to insufficient staff.

At times, you find that one supervisor is responsible for 600 to 800 participants across the number of villages as opposed to 100 to 150, as per the Programme guidelines. It is impossible to do justice in the monitoring of such projects.

As noted by Phillips et al. (2009) and Zulu, Nyawo and Mashau (2017), adequate human resources is a key driver in project implementation. This inadequate human resource capacity to supervise the EPWP workers at the site level has resulted in many workers found loitering around or sleeping under the trees. Consequently, in some parts of the Eastern Cape and KZN, EPWP workers are derogatively referred to as “*ocambalala*”, a Xhosa and Zulu word loosely translated as “the ones who sleep”, according to one official.

The inadequate number of officials to coordinate and supervise the EPWP was not the only cited challenge by the officials interviewed. The lack of appropriate skills to implement the Programme was another issue raised by these officials. Designing and implementing labour-intensive projects requires certain skill sets, which are not readily available from many public bodies implementing the EPWP. One official said:

Lack of appropriate skills in implementing labour-intensive projects in most public bodies is a major challenge which affects the achievement of the work opportunity targets, and more training has to be provided. Public bodies need to also commit [to] the LIC [Labour Intensive Construction] method in project implementation.

6.1.2.4 Planning, Project Identification and Stakeholder Engagements

Planning, project identification and stakeholder engagement form part of the key activities in the PTE framework, against which this study is framed. Before any project is implemented, planning, identification and stakeholder engagement are key milestones. In the EPWP projects, stakeholders include, among others, communities and different spheres of government directly and indirectly affected by the project. During the discussion with the groups, these key elements of the PTE were one of the points largely debated and different experiences were shared. This was not surprising because all members of the groups were either on the implementation or coordination of the EPWP or both.

On the planning part during group discussions, there were strong views from the majority in the groups that when projects were implemented, there was a tendency to use a blanket approach, especially on projects that were implemented by the national departments in local communities. These participants maintain that national departments did not plan with and consult local and provincial spheres of government when they identify and implement their projects at local level. They went further to say that this top-down approach by national departments created problems at local levels because sometimes the projects brought by national departments came with different conditions, such as payment rates which were higher than the local rate paid by provincial departments of municipalities in the same localities. So, when workers of the projects implemented by the municipalities or provincial departments find out that another project is paying a higher wage rate, they went on strike and demanded that their wages be increased to match that of projects implemented by the national department. This affected all the projects implemented by the provincial and local spheres of government. With the trend of violent protests experienced in the country, many properties

(both private and public) are damaged.

This lack of proper planning and consultation, especially by national departments implementing projects at local and community level, is inconsistent with the provisions of legislation, particularly Chapter 3 of the Constitution and the Intergovernmental Relations Frameworks Act of 2005, which promotes cooperation among spheres of government. Section 41(1)(h) of the Constitution promotes that:

All spheres of government and organs of states must co-operate with one another in mutual trust and in good faith by: (i) assisting and supporting one another, (ii) informing one another of, and consulting one another on matters of common interest (Government of South Africa, 1996:25-26).

However, the problem with planning was not only raised on the intergovernmental level, but also on the “intragovernmental level”, which concerns planning and cooperation “within an organisation itself”. There were strong arguments within groups that the EPWP was not included in the broader plans of their organisations and allocated adequate resources. In fact, the EPWP was considered by most organisations as an add-on function and it did not receive the necessary attention it deserved within the organisation, especially from executive management. One participant said:

When it comes to our department, there is [a] lack of understanding of the EPWP and its requirements. There are no proper linkages from within the department. One unit is doing this, and the other unit is doing that. There is no coordination and coherence internally when it comes to [the] EPWP.

This statement invoked a spirited discussion on how the EPWP is viewed and treated in their organisations. It led to some other members venting their frustration about the lack of cooperation and integration of the EPWP within the broader plans of their organisations. One participant went on to say:

Top management does not understand the EPWP, they are not involved in EPWP, and they don't see it as part of the programmes they must implement. You sometimes find a manager saying, “I can't implement or report that project because it is funded by the EPWP grant”, yet the EPWP grant is the top-up funding to the baseline allocation of the department, and it is that baseline allocation that must be used to implement [the] EPWP. This shows lack of understanding from the management and affects the implementation of the Programme and achieving the Programme objectives.

From these discussions, one can generally deduce a stronger sense of neglect of the EPWP by implementing bodies, especially in the top management level. These assertions from the group discussions indicated in no ambiguous terms that the EPWP did not enjoy the same level of support and treatment within their organisations, like other line function units and programmes, especially from planning, implementation as well as reporting. This had a direct impact on the two key strategic objectives of the state: service delivery and employment creation, as attested by Bohler-Muller et al. (2016) that the deficiency of public service delivery in most parts of the country particularly has resulted in violent clashes between the police and communities. Citizens are angry with the lack of service delivery by the state.

The next part which was largely debated in the groups was stakeholder engagement. As indicated

earlier, stakeholder engagement is one of the key milestones in project planning and implementation. It also forms an integral part of the activities in the PTE as the theoretical framework for this study. Groups were divided when it came to stakeholder engagement on project identification and implementation. Some said they have existing structures and procedures that they followed in engaging stakeholders and those procedures and processes worked well. One participant said:

In Zibambele, there is an existing policy to deal with the implementation of the programme and stakeholder engagement [is] conducted through the Transportation Committee [with] various government departments and community stakeholders, such as ward councillors and traditional leaders.

Another participant added:

At local government level, [the] community is consulted at the IDP Forums and when the project has to be implemented, communities are engaged at project planning stages until the site establishment stage, implementation until the hand-over stage.

On the contrary, not all group members agreed on existing procedures and structures for stakeholder engagement within their organisations. Some participants attested that they were no existing structures or policies on stakeholder engagements. There was a vigorous debate on this matter, with some members going as far as saying the absence of existing procedures for stakeholder engagements has given rise to the new phenomenon called “*amadelangokubona*”, referring to local business forums that demand 30% of all construction projects in their area. This is in reference to the government Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, which stipulates that 30% of construction projects of a certain threshold should be subcontracted to local businesses. However, it is believed that this policy in some cases is deliberately misinterpreted by these local business forums as a ‘free-for-all’ and no processes and requirements must be followed to subcontract or award that 30%.

The groups were arguing that if there were proper stakeholder engagement processes and approaches followed, this phenomenon of *amadelangokubona* would not have arisen because the government policy would have been clearly explained to all the affected stakeholders. The requirements to be eligible of a contract would have been explained in advance, including the awarding criteria. The *amadelangokubona* phenomenon has resulted in many delays in project implementation and damage of private properties when these members of local business forums were stopping the projects from starting if none of their members were subcontracted. According to the *Mail & Guardian* (2019), “about 183 infrastructure and construction projects nationwide, valued at more than R63-billion according to one industry body, have been hindered — often by violent disruptions led by entities claiming to be local community or business forums, demanding a stake, typically 30%, in projects”. There has been alleged cases of people losing their lives through the violence erupting on sites instigated by these local business forums. On 9 February 2018, the *Business Day* (2018) reported that “the forum was linked to construction worker Craig Mallon’s death after his work at a KwaDukuza hospital was hamstrung by their disruptive tactics in the months before his death”.

6.1.2.5 Compliance with Programme Regulations and Procedures

Compliance with regulations and procedures is another critical process in the implementation of the Programme, and forms an integral part of the activities in the PTE as the theoretical framework for this study. This refers to policy guidelines and procedures regulating to the coordination and

implementation of the Programme. During the discussions, the majority of participants generally acknowledged the existence of EPWP regulations and guidelines. However, some questioned the relevance of some of the regulations considering the changing economic conditions in the country. One participant questioned the relevance of the Ministerial Determination for the EPWP and said:

The Ministerial Determination focuses on unskilled and elementary work, yet the country is sitting with [a] high unemployment rate of graduates. Isn't this [the] time to revise the Ministerial Determination for [the] EPWP to cater for a broader range of unemployed people in the country, including graduates, and designing new programmes to cater for such groups?

Others argue that regulations and procedures are there, but the main challenge was the implementation of those regulations. They contended that most public bodies did comply with the Programme regulations and procedures, which negatively affects the objective and implementation of the EPWP. The following were some of the reasons they cited resulting in noncompliance:

- **Lack of dedicated EPWP human resource capacity from public bodies:** Insufficient staff are responsible for the implementation and coordination of the EPWP in each public body.
- **Lack of commitment from senior management:** They lamented senior managers in their public bodies not showing drive and commitment to implement the EPWP. Hence nobody follows up on compliance with regulations and guidelines for the EPWP.
- **EPWP is regarded as an add-on function by many public bodies:** Participants complained that the EPWP was regarded as add-on function and not forming part of the programmes that must be implemented by their organisation. For example, due to a lack of capacity, the EPWP function was given to an official who already had a clear job description and who is measured or assessed based on that original job description. As a result, no attention or focus is placed on the EPWP by the official. Hence, the Programme suffers.
- **Lack of technical capacity to design and implement EPWP Projects:** The research participants complained about the shortage of technical skills from officials to design EPWP projects labour-intensively. As such, when projects are designed, they do not conform to the EPWP guidelines and this adversely affects the Programme and its objectives.
- **Lack of general understanding of the EPWP, its objectives, and implementation method:** The participants criticised both the communities and officials for not fully understanding the Programme, its objectives and requirements. For example, one participant said:

Due to the current unemployment problem in the country, there has been a misinterpretation of some guiding legislation regarding the EPWP, such as the Ministerial Determination that the Programme seeks to create full-time employment. Workers [...] when the project has ended, demand to be absorbed by the organisation on a full-time basis.

- **Lack of enforcement mechanisms:** Participants claimed that there was no shortage of policies and guidelines and in fact, the Programme has great policies and guidelines, but to enforce these policies was the major problem. Nobody wants to take responsibility and there was no clarity about who must drive the enforcement.

The point of enforcement was further debated, with the majority of participants inferring a lack of clarity on the role of the DPWI as the overall coordinator of the EPWP when it comes to enforcement rules. As such, they unanimously proposed that an overarching EPWP policy be introduced to bring all other regulations and rules under one umbrella to also provide clarity on the enforcement role of DPWI when it comes to the transgressors and further empower the DPWI to take punitive actions against those who are non-compliant.

From the group discussions, the researcher considered these points of noncompliance raised by participants very concerning, especially if they were led by state organs, and communities deduced that the state did not uphold the regulations and rules it introduced. One could refer to this as an act of self-sabotage because, on the one hand, the government introduced programmes and regulations to improve social and economic conditions of people in order to address the high levels of deprivation caused by the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, as noted by Zikhali (2018). But on the other hand, the same government that should be championing these programmes and regulations was found wanting. As mentioned in sections 6.1.1.2 and 6.1.1.8, the state must lead by example and comply with its legislation to improve service delivery and reduce poverty and unemployment.

6.1.2.6 Programme Understanding and Commitment

The understanding of the Programme and commitment by administrative and political leadership in various public bodies implanting the EPWP was another prominent theme that came up during the groups' discussion. The majority of groups felt that lack of commitment from both political and administrative leadership at various public bodies was the major challenge affecting the implementation of the Programme. They claim that without buy-in from these two levels of leadership, EPWP in those public bodies remained "a step-child", meaning the EPWP became an after-thought in all the plans of these public bodies.

A robust debate erupted in trying to clarify the difference between commitment and interference. Some were raising questions about where one draws the line between commitment and political or administrative interference. This point was raised mainly because in the earlier discussion, there was frequent mention of political and administrative interference in driving and running the Programme, particularly during the recruitment of workers, where councillors as political leaders in their communities were using their powers to dictate who should be appointed to work in the Programme without following the established recruitment guidelines and processes. One participant attempted to explain that a clear distinction should be made between commitment and interference and said:

[The] EPWP [has] existing procedures and guidelines on the implementation of the Programme. What is required from both political and administrative leadership is to drive the Programme in line with the established guidelines, hold senior managers in their unit to account on the implementation of the EPWP, and have the Programme at the centre stage of the public bodies, like other service delivery programmes, [and] not to be treated as a second thought. Leaders should not use their political or administrative powers to disobey the established rules and guidelines of the Programme.

These views from the group discussion are consistent with the findings by Phillips (2004) on the study of the HCBC programme, as part of the EPWP in the North-West Province discussed in section 3.1.3. That study revealed that poor leadership and lack of commitment were among the major

challenges that affected the implementation of the Programme in the two key departments involved (DOH and DSD). A similar conclusion was drawn by Wong (2017:19) in his study regarding the NPWP introduced in South Africa just after 1994, as part of the strategy to implement the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) initiatives. Wong cited a lack of backing of the programme by both political and administrative leadership as one of the major shortcomings in the implementation of the NPWP. To improve the implementation and success of the Programme, Phillips (2004:34) recommended “strong political and senior administration commitment and leadership as well as reinforcing EPWP as a delivery strategy of the line budget function activities of each participating departments”.

The understanding of the Programme by various role players across the spectrum of government institutions also became a bone of contention during the group discussions. Some group members accused EPWP workers, management, as well as political leaders at public body levels of, not fully understanding the EPWP and its objectives, which resulted in poor implementation and coordination of the Programme. One participant said:

In my department if you take three members of senior management and ask them about their understanding of the EPWP, you will be shocked with the type of responses you will get. You will come out with three completely different and unrelated answers. This begs a big question that if officials at those levels cannot give you solid and precise answers about the Programme they supposed to champion, what type of result on the Programme implementation should one expect.

Many participants during the discussions strongly agreed with this example, arguing that the poor performance and implementation of the EPWP in public bodies lay with the understanding and interpretation of the Programme. Hence, at some point, as one participant explained, “you will find officials and management saying ‘I can’t report that project because [it] is not funded by the EPWP grant’” yet all projects, according to the EPWP guidelines, must be reported on, whether they funded by an incentive grant or not. This concern was also raised in section 6.1.2.3 above, where the participants accused many public bodies of being solely focused on the EPWP incentive grant as the only funding source, yet National Treasury provides various streams of funding which should be used to implement the EPWP, such as equitable share, municipal infrastructure grants (for a municipality), provincial road maintenance grants, and other grants provided by Treasury. Therefore, this behaviour by officials and managers in different public bodies demonstrates a seriously concerning and shallow understanding of the EPWP. With that limited understanding, it can therefore not be expected that such a public body will achieve its EPWP targets and objectives to create the most needed jobs.

What also came out during the discussions was that officials at public body levels considered EPWP as a DPWI Programme and had nothing to do with them. These officials believed that when they implement the EPWP, they were actually supporting the DPWI and not their own organisation. This was the biggest misconception about the Programme even with the senior and executive management. As one participant stated, “you will find managers and supervisors saying [that they] are focusing on implementing the Programme for Public Works and missing our deadlines”.

These assertions by management and senior leaders in different public bodies were a serious indictment of the entrenched and misconstrued information about the Programme at public body level. Programme understanding, buy-in and commitment are the critical inputs outlined in the PTE framework to successfully implement the Programme and achieve its intended outcomes. In order to achieve the buy-in and commitment, the EPWP (2019) outlines that, among other things, with the

signing of the EPWP Implementation Protocol, where a public body commits to follow the EPWP guidelines, reach the targets, and further develop policy, there should be capacity created within the organisation to coordinate and implement the EPWP.

6.1.2.7 Youth Participation in the Programme

One of the socioeconomic problems the nation is dealing with is high unemployment of young people. According to StatsSA (2021), the youth unemployment rate in the country is sitting at 63.3%, using an expanded definition of unemployment and 43.6% using a narrow definition of unemployment. But what draws one's attention during the group discussion were claims that were made by different participants indicating that youths did want to participate in the Programme for various reasons. Here are the main reasons that they cited being raised by the youths who opted out of the Programme:

- Low rate of the stipend.
- Stigma associated with the Programme. They said if you work in the Programme, you are labelled as poor and uneducated in the community.
- The nature of the projects was not attractive. They were traditional projects that used to be done by old people.

This finding was not surprising on its own. In fact, it provided answers and confirmed the reasons for the low number of youth participating in the EPWP, as shown in section 6.1.1.1 above, where it was found that of the total sampled EPWP workers, only 44% were youths between the ages of 18 and 35 years. But what then becomes a critical and unavoidable question is why even with this disturbingly high rate of unemployment, the youths still do not want to participate since the wage rate was low in their eyes and due to the stigma associated with the Programme, and the nature of the projects, and they still chose to remain out of the Programme and unemployed.

6.1.2.8 Overarching Policy and Enforcement Mechanism

The EPWP's overarching policy and enforcement mechanism came into the spotlight during the group discussions. This was propelled by the question on the policy and legislative framework governing the EPWP. There has been a rise in the demand for service delivery to citizens of the country, as Bohler-Muller et al. (2016) noted, because there is a deficiency in public service delivery in most parts of the country, particularly in housing, water and sanitation, roads and other public infrastructure, which has resulted in violent clashes between the police and communities. Citizens are angry with the lack of service delivery by the state. Government, as provided for in Section 27(2) of the Constitution, "must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to have access to: (a) healthcare service; (b) sufficient food, water; and (c) social security". In other words, the state has a constitutional obligation to deliver services such as healthcare services, food and social security to the citizens. It must put policies and legislation in place to assist in the delivery of services.

During group discussions, the majority of the participants raised the absence of the overarching EPWP policy as one of the key challenges facing the implementation of the Programme. Their argument was that the EPWP relied on various regulations and guidelines located in different areas but this did not cover all the aspects of the Programme, such as the minimum wage rate and maximum age limit for one to participate. All these issues, as participants alluded, were haphazardly addressed by the DPWI through circulars and practice notes, some of which did not have a clear legal standing.

But most important, these documents do not present any enforcement mechanisms and punitive measures for non-compliance.

Furthermore, the participants indicated that the lack of a written policy left public institutions implementing EPWP without the necessary powers or authority to coordinate across sectors or across the various spheres of government. In addition, the participants cited disjuncture among the different spheres of governments in terms of the planning, coordination and reporting functions that undermines the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the EPWP due to a lack of overarching policy. They maintain that the absence of a written policy created challenges for the clarity of EPWP positions in terms of the active labour market regime and social protection approaches. This gap also undermines programme compliance by linking coordination and limiting enforcement to inter-sectoral relationships instead of policies. As a result, the participants stated that the absence of an overarching EPWP policy limits the growth and success of the Programme.

One participant explained:

There is a need for [the] Programme to have an overarching policy to guide and provide for the implementation of the EPWP. The policy must be very clear on institutional arrangements, [and] coordination and the roles and responsibilities of all implementers, political leaders and administrators at departmental and municipal levels.

Another participant added:

The absence of the overall EPWP policy that binds and directs everybody across all the tiers of government to coordinate, implement and report [on] the Programme is a major challenge. Without a proper policy, it is difficult to hold anybody to account.

There was no standard universal rule which dictates that a policy or a law must be enacted before a PEP is implemented. Yet it is rather unconventional for a large and complex programme like the EPWP not to have a dedicated and clear policy that guides the Programme, especially considering its role in poverty alleviation and job creation. Instead, the Programme relies on issuing circulars and practice notes to address policy issues. This is concerning, particularly since the Programme has existed for more than 15 years, according to the EPWP (2019). International experience and best practices have shown that similar PEPs implemented across the world have existing policies to guide them. Here a reference is made to India's MGNREGA Programme implemented through an Act of Parliament (Talbot et al., 2019:25; Das, 2013:1). In Costa Rica, the *Pago por Servicios Ambientales* (PPSA) was introduced as part of the Forestry Law No. 7575, according to Schwarzer et al. (2016).

The participants, during the discussions, raised that a written EPWP policy would eliminate the ambiguity by clearly articulating the Programme's objectives and structures, institutional mandates, legal and financing frameworks, expected outcomes, and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. It should clearly lay out the roles of responsibilities of all involved institutions and provide a basis for effective programme implementation, as these elements are critical to ensure coordination, coherence and effective internal and external dynamics that can harness the EPWP's potential to strengthen employment and contribute to South Africa's inclusive social development and equitable economic growth.

6.1.2.9 Wage Rate Inconsistency and Late Wage Payments

This theme refers to different wage rates paid by various public bodies to EPWP workers as well as the time it took to process those payments. During the group discussions, there were serious concerns raised mainly by officials who were representing the local sphere of government. Their discontent was regarding the behaviour of national and provincial departments when they implement their projects at community levels. These officials were critical of these two spheres of government for not aligning with the local wage rate when they paid their participants in the projects they implemented at the local level. Instead, when they brought projects to the local sphere of government, they didn't align their wage rate to the local going rate. They came with the projects and pay higher wages than those paid by the municipalities. This ended up creating tension with the local workers, especially those working in municipal-implemented projects because they were not paid the same wage rate even if their projects might be similar to those implemented by either national or provincial government departments.

When EPWP workers who were employed at municipal projects discovered that there was a new project, which paid a higher wage rate than what they were currently receiving, and they then demanded the same wage rate from the municipal projects. This demand was aggravated by the fact that community members do not necessarily know the details of whether the project is implemented by the municipality, provincial department, or national department. In their eyes, and correctly so, these are all government projects and should be paying the same wage rate. This inconsistency in the rate of pay causes much instability at project site level. With the current unemployment rate in the country and the volatile political environment, any friction becomes a fertile breeding ground for community unrest. This sometimes leads to strikes, which results in delays in project implementation. With the nature of industrial action and protest at the community level, the cost of damage to both public and private properties runs very high. One participant said:

What really causes confusion is when a new project comes and [is] implemented in the same locality, and it pays [a] higher stipend. The workers in the old project, they [...] will demand [a] higher wage because they see their fellow EPWP workers getting [a] higher stipend, yet there are all in the same programme. This affects the project timelines as workers will go on strike for higher wages.

This point further supports the discussion on the absence of an overarching EPWP policy (covered in section 6.1.2.8 above) because discrepancies in wage rates should have been fully addressed by such a policy. Looking at this in light of the issue of an overarching EPWP policy, this conduct by provincial and national spheres of government exposes the silo mentality and approach that exists across the three spheres of government, which is inconsistent with the ethos and provisions of the legislation, particularly Chapter 3 of the Constitution and the Intergovernmental Relations Frameworks Act of 2005, which promotes cooperation among the spheres of government. Section 41(1)(h) of the Constitution promotes that:

All spheres of government and organs of states must co-operate with one another in mutual trust and in good faith by: 1) assisting and supporting one another; 2) informing one another of, and consulting one another on matters of common interest (Government of South Africa, 1996:25-26).

Apart from the inconsistency in the wage rates between these three spheres of government, delays in the payment of the wages to EPWP workers is another critical point cited as a challenge during the

discussions with the EPWP officials that affects the Programme. Some research participants, during the discussions, even estimated that it took between three to six weeks to pay workers their wages after the month ended due to the internal verification process that must be followed before any payment was made. One member of the group gave an example of the process that they followed to verify if a person indeed worked before the payment is released:

At the end of the month, all workers' attendance registers are collected from the sites, verified and reconciled. A submission is prepared for the approval of payment of workers. This is one of the longest processes because they are many officials who must sign to authorise the payment. It starts from [a] junior official to the highest level. Capturing of the payment [is] by [an] accounting clerk. [We] wait for the system runs. This refers to an automated payment by the system to workers and debtors of the organisations. The run is timed according to specified time intervals. Normally, the system runs once or twice a week. If you miss the first run, you must wait for the following week for the system run for the payment to be processed.

Echoing the same sentiments, another participant said:

Some payments are not done timeously due to cash flow problems experienced by implementing bodies [that] could not run their projects properly and paid their contractors late, and those contractors, in [turn], paid their workers later too. Or, the internal payment system takes one to two weeks before the money becomes available to the workers after month end. There is no specific date that the workers know for sure that they will receive their money. It is always guesswork or a wait-and-see approach. When workers do not receive their payments, they stop working, and this affects project timelines and service delivery.

The majority of research participants during the discussion displayed a degree of sympathy with the EPWP workers whose payments are delayed, with some even indicating that it was unacceptable that a programme that was introduced to fight poverty seemed to be doing the opposite. The same point of delayed payments was raised during the interviews with EPWP workers, who testified that the predictability of income is compromised and they could not plan properly for financial commitments if they did not know when they were going to receive their wages.

Wages to EPWP workers form an integral part of achieving their sustainable livelihoods, as noted in both the Sustainable Livelihood Framework as well as PTE. Financial capital is one of the five key assets to "overcome stress and shocks", as submitted by Mubangizi (2020:18). Furthermore, Zimmermann (2014) cautioned that the payment of EPWP participants should not be very low as it defeats the very purpose of the Programme; instead a balance in terms of wage rate must be created. The delay in paying EPWP workers thwarts the very objective of the Programme of providing work and income support to poor and unemployed people, thereby improving their livelihoods.

6.1.2.10 Management and Keeping of Project Records

Management and keeping of records is a legislative obligation for all government organs, according to the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa (NARSSA) Act No. 43 of 1996, to ensure good governance and proper administration of state resources, as asserted by the AGSA (2018). During group discussions, the majority of participants cited records management and safe keeping of project information as one of the major challenges they experience in their organisations.

This challenge seemed to be prevalent across all public bodies implementing the EPWP. The participants were arguing that records management, particularly for the EPWP, was in the state of disarray in their organisations and this creates many problems when there are being audited. One participant said:

When [the] Auditor-General visits our office to audit our projects, we run like headless chickens [and] try to locate the EPWP project files and documents, which could have been avoided if there were proper systems in place as well as dedicated human capacity to run [the] EPWP [in] our organisation.

Giving another perspective on records management, one participant said:

Record keeping and record management has been very difficult in rural municipalities, especially during the time of Covid-19. The rotation or absence of staff during the period, as some are working from home, immensely affected record management and reconciliation, particularly for projects in rural areas.

These views point in the same direction of lack of proper records management system and capacity. They are also consistent with the findings of Melody and Zonyana (2018:8) on their study that explored the EPWP “as an important tool and contributor to the City of Cape Town’s Economic Growth Strategy”. These researchers emphasised the following among the critical challenges with the EPWP's implementation in the City of Cape Town:

- Documentation, including contracts and project initiation reports not systematically archived.
- Absence of a formal, written policy for managing and classifying records and documentation.
- There is no central repository for the necessary records.
- Reporting requirements are onerous and cause conflict within organizations.

The issue of poor records management seemed to be a general concern by many in the public service, as observed by Mojapelo (2020:1), who states that “there is consensus among researchers that records are poorly managed in the public sector”. This means that beyond the EPWP, public administration is weakened without proper records management. This was further supported by the International Council on Archives (2016:23), who underscored that effective and proper records management is a critical requirement for good governance. It further promotes administrative transparency and compliance with the rule of law.

During the discussion in the groups, the issue of lack of human resource capacity kept on coming as the major contributor to poor management because officials were overstretched, and there was no dedicated capacity to manage and coordinate the EPWP. This was further observed by Melody and Zonyana (2017:8) who noted that the EPWP office is under-resourced and “there are no proper and coherent systems to manage and keep project data at public body level”. People who are working on EPWP projects in many public bodies, especially municipality, have other responsibilities that they were originally appointed to fulfil and still need to attend to. So, the EPWP is an add-on and they must choose where to focus and invest more time. As a result, the Programme suffers.

6.1.2.11 Mechanisms to Address Implementation Challenges

With all the challenges raised during the group discussions, participants were then given an

opportunity to share their perspectives about how these challenges should be addressed to ensure the improved implementation of the EPWP and by extension, reinvigorate public service delivery. In this regard, Osah and Pade-Khene (2020:11) note that the state (across different spheres: municipality, provincial and national) is obligated to provide general public service and assets to communities. In South Africa, Tonon (2018:23) noted that public service delivery mechanisms have been regarded as an important intervention by the state to reduce inequality in the country and address the legacy of apartheid and imbalances and realise the aspirations of the NDP “to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030” (NPC, 2012b:17).

The challenges raised by participants during group discussions have a direct effect on the state achieving these objectives of eradicating poverty, unemployment and inequality as well as reversing imbalances instigated by apartheid. As a result, the following were the proposed suggestions that came out during the discussions with the groups of participants to address these challenges and improve the implementation of the EPWP, thereby ameliorating public service delivery and livelihoods of rural communities.

1) Increase human resources and improve capacity of officials

Since there was a great concern with regards to dedicated human resources capacity from each public bodies’ responsibility of coordinating the EPWP. There was a general concession among all group members that this was the most critical area that most public bodies must consider improving. This human resource capacity does not only include warm bodies but also the technical abilities and skills that must be taught to those officials to be able to coordinate and implement the EPWP in their respective public bodies.

2) EPWP National Policy

Most group members agreed that the overarching EPWP policy must be introduced. They stated that some of the challenges experienced by the Programme were a result of the absence of an overarching policy that guides and drives the EPWP. The participants suggested that the policy must clearly stipulate roles and responsibilities of all involved in the Programme and also punitive measures for those who do not comply.

3) Remodel the EPWP and introduce new programmes

The majority of the participants were concerned that since the EPWP was introduced in 2004, there were no major programmatic changes introduced, especially taking into consideration that circumstances have changed since 2004. They, therefore, suggested that new programmes should be introduced, taking advantage of the 4IR in terms of technology, unemployed graduates, and deliberate small business development initiatives across the Programme.

4) Depoliticise the recruitment of participants

Political interference came out as one of the major challenges experienced by the Programme, especially when it comes to the recruitment of workers. The developed recruitment guidelines were not adopted by all public bodies implementing the EPWP, particularly those who were involved in the recruitment. More workshops and information sessions are required, especially with councillors for them to clearly understand their role in the recruitment of EPWP workers.

5) Develop an exit strategy

This study has revealed that there are two broad categories of workers in the EPWP. The first category comprises the workers and the researcher classifies them as long- or short-term

contracted workers. Long-term workers are those who have been perpetually working on the Programme and their contract has been renewed and extended. As shown in 6.1.1.1 above, more than 24% of the interviewed workers had more than 10 years in the Programme, with the longest-serving participant having more than 18 years in the Programme. The second category is short-term contracted workers whose contracts are less than 12 months and project-based, meaning after the end of the project, their contracts also end. An exit strategy must be developed for these two categories of workers, especially the second category, because once the projects end, they have no chance of being re-employed or their contracts being extended, and they then go back to unemployment and poverty.

6) Alignment and cooperation across the three spheres of government and improved communication

Lack of communication and the silo mentality and approach across all three spheres of government came out very strongly during the group discussions. Participants said national or a provincial departments introduce a programme to the local sphere of government without consultation. Such an approach created challenges between the local sphere of government and communities, especially when it came to the rate of pay, since provincial and national departments were paying higher wages compared to the local sphere of government on the projects they implement in their wards. The silo mentality and approach are inconsistent with the ethos and provisions of legislation, particularly Chapter 3 of the Constitution and the Intergovernmental Relations Frameworks Act of 2005, which promotes cooperation among the spheres of government. Section 41(1)(h) of the Constitution promotes that:

all spheres of government and organs of states must “co-operate with one another in mutual trust and in good faith by: (i) assisting and supporting one another, (ii) informing one another of, and consulting one another on matters of common interest” (Government of South Africa, 1996:25-26).

Therefore, strong cooperation, collaboration and communication across all three spheres of government must be promoted.

7) Increase funding and alignment with relief funding for productive work

There was a divergence in opinions during group discussions when it came to funding. Some members of the group claimed that the funding was insufficient and more EPWP funding was needed. On the contrary, other group members contended that the issue was not about insufficient funding but mainstreaming the EPWP across all public bodies and ensuring that public bodies did not only rely on the EPWP incentive grant as their only source of funding to implement the Programme. Instead, they must also utilise other funding allocations that exist within public bodies to implement the EPWP. Furthermore, during the Covid-19 pandemic, there were additional funding allocations that were provided as relief to support initiatives for fighting the pandemic and improving livelihoods. All those funding streams were also available to be utilised in the creation of EPWP work opportunities.

6.1.2.12 Summary of Findings from Government Officials

This subsection focuses on the analysis and discussion of the results from the second category of the research participants: the government officials, made up of managers, coordinators or champions of the EPWP responsible for the coordination and/or implementation of the Programme from the 10 key

departments and eight municipalities targeted for this study, as discussed in section 5.2.5 (Sample Size) above. The analysis and discussion concentrated on the main themes that emerged as the outcomes of the focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews. These themes are summarised in Figure 10 below.

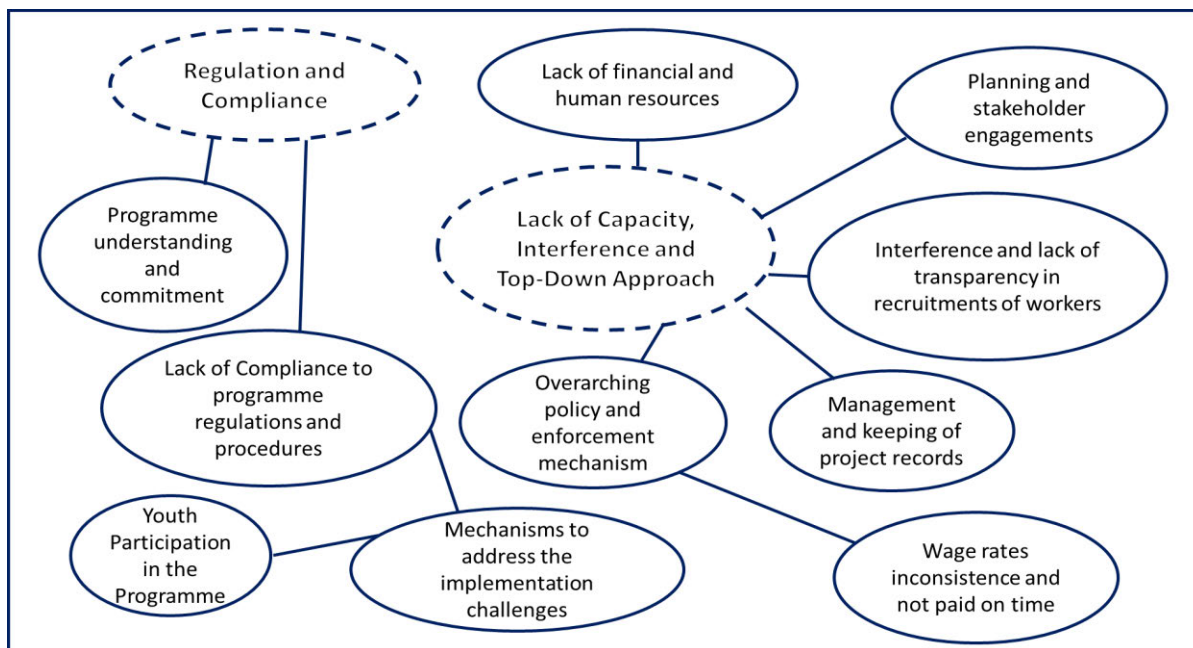


Figure 10: Graphical representation of emerging themes: EPWP managers and champions

Lack of capacity, interference and disregard for the existing procedures in the recruitment of EPWP workers generated a robust debate among group members, as they were very concerned about the behaviour of ward councillors when it came to the recruitment of participants and their disregard of existing processes to be followed. Furthermore, the lack of financial and human resources was cited as one of the impediments to the implementation of the Programme, especially from the local sphere of government. While a smaller percentage of participants were of the view that most EPWP implementing bodies focused on the EPWP incentive grant provided by the DPWI as the sole funding for the Programme, they noted that there are various other streams of funding provided by National Treasury, such as equitable shares, municipal infrastructure grants (for a municipality), provincial road maintenance grants, and other grants provided by NT. As such, the majority of participants had an unclear picture of the funding available. They believed that the EPWP employment opportunities must only be implemented using the DPWI incentive grant. However, many EPWP implementing bodies underspend their allocation, as reflected in the AGSA (2020) and National Treasury (2020) reports.

The analysis also revealed that a lack of planning, stakeholder engagements, and compliance with EPWP processes and procedures formed part of the major challenges affecting the implementation of the Programme. This included a lack of programme understanding and commitment, especially at senior management levels, both politically and administratively. The majority of groups felt that a lack of commitment from both political and administrative leadership at various public bodies is a major challenge affecting the implementation of the Programme. They alleged that without buy-in from these two levels of leadership, the EPWP in those public bodies remain “a step-child”, meaning EPWP becomes a second thought in all the plans of these public bodies. Furthermore, a lack of youth participation in the Programme came out, and key reasons for such were also raised, which include:

low rate of the stipend; stigma associated with the Programme (e.g. youths say that if you work in the Programme, you are labelled as poor and uneducated in the community); and the nature of our projects (youths feel EPWP projects are not attractive, they are old, traditional projects used to be done by older people).

Additionally, the themes discussed under this sub-section are the lack of an overarching EPWP policy and enforcement mechanisms; wage rate inconsistency and payment delays; and lastly, inadequate management and keeping of project records, which resulted in adverse audit findings by the AGSA. This challenge was mainly attributed to the lack of human resource capacity because officials are overstretched, and there is no dedicated capacity to manage and coordinate the EPWP in many public bodies, especially at municipal level. The next subsection analyses and discusses the results of the third and final category of research participants, the key community informants, as mentioned in section 6.1 above.

6.1.3 Key Community Informants: Category 3

Key community informants comprise local ward councillors, ward committee members, school principals, local business leaders, and other prominent persons in the community where the EPWP projects are implemented. For these research participants, the key objective was to establish whether or not the various PEPs implemented in their communities contribute to the delivery of public services and improving livelihoods in rural communities.

The sample for this category was 15 participants from areas where the EPWP projects are implemented. A purposive, non-probability sampling method was used because this is a known group of participants with a specific role in their communities, and they were likely to provide insight into whether the Programme contributes to the delivery of public services and improving livelihoods in their rural communities, as compared to a simple random sampling of any community members. The decision to use this sampling method is supported by Saunders (2012:34), who defined a purposive, non-probability sampling strategy as an approach whereby a researcher bases their decision on past experience, objectives of the study, as well as the nature of the population when selecting the sample. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) further argue that this sampling strategy is more useful when one deals with a restricted population to serve as the main source of information in line with the objectives of the study, which was clearly the case in this study.

A total of 11 key community informants were interviewed, equivalent to a 73% response rate. Two ward councillors and a school principal kept on postponing the interviews on four occasions, citing busy schedules, while another ward councillor declined to participate in the study because he has been participating in many research projects but never got to see the results of such, and he regarded the exercise as the waste of his time. Regrettably, due to the timelines the researcher had for this study, he took a decision to move on without these ward councillors.

The research data was collected through one-on-one interviews conducted with participants using pre-arranged questions. In analysing the responses for this category of participants, five themes were identified from responses to the questions asked. The next subsections discuss these themes, namely, 1) demographic information of research participants and their role in the community; 2) community assets created through the EPWP; 3) community service delivery challenges; 4) created assets and support for other government service delivery imperatives; and 5) created assets with benefits for communities and improved wellbeing.

6.1.3.1 Demographic Information of Research Participants and Roles in the Community

Out of 11 key community informants interviewed, eight (61%) are males and three (39%) are females. In terms of their role in the community, the majority (six individuals or 54%) were ward councillors, followed by two (18%) ward committee members, and one school principal, community business leader, and community activist (9%) each. These research participants represent a good mixture of key community role players compared to focusing on one segment of the society, who may provide a one-sided view based on their role in the community, as observed by Saunders (2012:51), who noted that the diversity of key informants is critical in any study to ensure that one captures a wide range of responses and different perspectives from people representing various sectors of society. This ensures that one does not end up with biased or one-sided results.

6.1.3.2 Community Assets Created Through the EPWP

This study focused on two key programmes identified within the Infrastructure Sector of the EPWP, which are the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme, as explained and discussed in section 1.7 (Study Demarcation) above. The questions posed to the participants were limited to these two programmes and linked to the first key objective of this study, which is to understand the impact of the assets created through the EPWP on service delivery and the livelihoods of communities.

In order to proceed with the interviews, the researcher first needed to ascertain if indeed EPWP projects were implemented in those targeted communities. As such, a basic question was posed to the participants to explain the assets created or maintained through the EPWP in their communities. All participants positively responded to this question and identified the following key types of projects implemented in the communities through the EPWP:

- Road maintenance;
- Road construction; and/or
- Bridge construction.

The responses from the key community informants paved the way for the researcher to then delve deeper into this subject to get a better understanding of the challenges that the communities experienced before the implementation of these EPWP projects, and this formed part of the second key question for this group of participants, as discussed below.

6.1.3.3 Community Service Delivery Challenges

Public service delivery is at the centre stage of the South African Government's priorities to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Section 27(2) of the Constitution provides that:

the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to have access to: (a) healthcare service; (b) sufficient food, water; and (c) social security (Government of South Africa, 1996).

In other words, the state has a constitutional obligation to deliver healthcare services, food, social security, and other basic services to the citizens.

The interviewed participants were asked to indicate service delivery challenges that they were experiencing in relation to the projects implemented by the government through the EPWP in their communities. Noting that this study focused on two key programmes identified within the Infrastructure Sector of the EPWP, which are Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme explained and discussed in section 1.7 (Study Demarcation) above, the challenges were limited to the ambit of these programmes. The questions posed to the research participants were also directly linked to the first key objective of this study, which is to understand the impact of the assets created through the EPWP on service delivery and the livelihoods of communities.

The overwhelming majority of the interviewed participants cited poor road infrastructure and the absence of bridges for community members to cross the rivers near their villages as major challenges in their communities. These participants raised various ways in which the poor condition of the road infrastructure and the absence of bridges affected communities and their livelihoods. One participant said:

Schools are on the other side of the river and kids find it very difficult to cross the river during rainy days, and they have to stay at home, which negatively affects their progress with their classes.

Another participant added:

Children and adults had to undress half-naked every day. They had to cross the river there, whether it [is] raining or not because there was no bridge for them to cross. Their dignity was tarnished. No old person, [or] even school-going children, should be subjected to such an inhuman condition. Our mothers, sisters, fathers and our children were subjected to such undignified conditions if they need something on the other side of the river for many years.

The plight of the community has been fully documented. For example, on 20 January 2020, *The Mercury* newspaper ran a story titled “Pupils’ perilous pathway to school”. The newspaper reported how pupils at Ekhamanzi Primary School near Greytown in KZN had to navigate through the dangerous river just to get to school and back home every day. There are well-known cases of children being washed away or drowned from that river. But these pupils have to wade through the water in spite of this. Below is a picture of some of the pupils crossing the river going to school, and this was their routine, whether in winter or summer. The children’s faces have been covered by the researcher to protect their identity.



Source: Thami Magubane, *Mercury Newspaper*, 17 January 2020. Picture: Doctor Ngcobo and African News Agency

This experience was evident and well captured in the speech by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Patricia de Lille, on 11 March 2021 during the handover ceremony of one of the bridges constructed by her Department for the Ekhamanzi community near Greytown. The Minister said:

We know that for so many years, our children, mothers and fathers have had to cross dangerous river streams to access the basic and important social amenities such as schools, clinics, government offices and even to get to work. It has always been the most heart breaking thing to me when we hear on the news of young children especially who drown while crossing a river to get to school (Polity, 2020).

The challenge of river dangers was also raised by another participant during the interview who said:

In 2004 and 2007, school children were swept away by the river and there were other cases where some dead bodies were found on the riverbanks. [We are] not sure if they were also swept [away] by the water or dumped in the river by criminals.

This participant further cited his personal experience with the dangerous river within his community and said:

Myself and another member of the community [...] at the forefront fighting for the bridges in our community, on one morning around 4:00 am we were crossing the river. My colleague slipped and fell into the water, he hurt his head and was hospitalised. Since then he never got better and subsequently passed away.

Besides the negative impact of the poor road infrastructure and absence of bridges on the education and lives of the pupils in these villages, there were other social, economic and livelihood challenges raised by the research participants as a result of the poor infrastructure. One participant said:

Police and medical services were struggling to cross the river during rainy days. This negatively affected the level of service delivery by government to the community, as they were unable to properly service the community during rainy seasons.

Another participant added that:

During funerals, hearses were struggling to reach the families of the deceased during the rainy days. Family members had to take out the coffin and carry it across the river because of the bad conditions of the old bridge.

On the economic front, the research participants also raised various issues that the poor road infrastructure and absence of bridges had on their communities and livelihood. One participant complained about the additional costs for them and their families due to poor infrastructure, arguing that they needed to remove their children from the local school, which is less than 5km away from their homes. They had to enrol them at a school in town, which is more than 35km away from their home. The route to the school in town is safer, however. If it rains, their children missed school and sometimes even missed exams due to the overflowing river. She asserted that this decision has cost implications because she now needs to pay extra transport fees for her children, something she would not need to do if her children were in the local school. Now, with many family members being unemployed, it meant they had to split the children's support grant money between food and school transport.

The removal of children from schools has a negative effect on the school funding model. The principal quoted the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) National Norms and Standards for School Funding which considers, among other things, the number of children enrolled in the school when allocating funding. The fewer the pupils, the less funding the school receives from the DBE. However, the cost of running the school remains the same because the infrastructure needs to be maintained and other expenses still have to be paid, regardless of whether pupils de-register from the school. For example, non-personnel-related costs, such as the school's capital needs as well as routine maintenance and repairs to all of its infrastructure facilities, do not change with the enrolment numbers. Most importantly, according to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding, "the school funding allocation is primarily or exclusively intended for the promotion of efficient and quality education in ordinary public schools". Therefore, without adequate funding, this objective may not be reached.

On the economic front, local businesses were struggling with the poor road infrastructure, as one participant indicated:

We spent a lot of money on petrol when going to town to [buy] stock for our shops because we use a longer route, which is more than 40km since there is no bridge that links our village

with the main road to town. These costs are then passed to our consumers and, in return, make a product more expensive, and sales get reduced.

Another participant was distressed as they narrated the ordeal some community members went through as a result of the poor road infrastructure and the absence of a bridge in their area:

Emergency services do not reach the community if it is raining. Family members had to come up with alternative arrangements (such as carrying the sick person on their back) to meet the ambulances halfway on the tarred road. At times, if there is no one to carry the sick person in that household, they wait until the rain subsides and the mud dries out to allow the vehicles to drive through.

All these challenges raised by the key community informants present clear evidence of the needs not being met and the plight of rural communities when government does not deliver basic services and respond to its Constitutional obligations, as articulated in Section 27(2) of the Constitution. The Constitution requires that:

The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to have access to: (a) healthcare service; (b) sufficient food, water; and (c) social security (Government of South Africa, 1996).

Furthermore, the 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development identifies service delivery as a key priority for the government RDP, which covers: 1) meeting basic needs; 2) urban and rural development; 3) democratisation and institutional reform; and 4) economic restructuring (Government of South Africa, 1994). To achieve these objectives, drastic steps have to be taken by the state and measures put in place to realise the Constitutional obligation, as noted by Tonon (2018), who said that the public service delivery mechanism has been regarded as an important intervention by the state to reduce inequality in South Africa.

6.1.3.4 Created Assets and Support for Other Government Service Delivery Imperatives

One of the objectives of this study was to understand the impact of the assets created through the EPWP for service delivery and livelihoods of communities. As it has been observed in various studies, not all infrastructure projects implemented by government end up in good use or add value to the lives and livelihoods of communities in the long run. Sulla and Zikhali (2018) evaluated the cost of building and upgrading Cup stadiums in South Africa for the Soccer World against their utilisation after what was dubbed by Jonathan Wilson, a sports journalist, the greatest footballing show on Earth. Their study found that the majority of the stadiums were not utilised to their full capacity post the tournament, and some are seldomly used, as there are not enough Premier Soccer League teams in those regions, yet it costs around R2 million to maintain each stadium per year. These stadiums fit the definition of a “white elephant”. Onyinyechi and Oghene-Mairo (2014:3) refer to them as seemingly valuable but onerous assets which create a financial strain for maintaining them which is more than what they are usually worth, and they cannot be easily disposed of. The cost of keeping them thus outweighs their worth or usefulness over time.

So, to assess whether or not the assets created by the EPWP contribute to government service delivery to communities, questions were asked to the research participants to establish the facts. The resounding majority of participants positively responded to this question and outlined how the constructed roads and bridges assisted in other public service delivery areas. One participant said:

Ambulances, especially now during the Covid-19 period, are able to access the villages easily, even if it's raining. This has potentially contributed in saving lives of many people that could have been lost if there was no bridge and the road was still in [a] bad condition.

In support of this statement, another participant added:

Police vehicles now easily reach our village if there is any emergency [that] required law enforcement. One of our critical problems in these villages is stock theft and gender-based violence. Therefore, the responsiveness of the police in many cases saves lives, especially in the case of gender-based violence. Again with stock theft, as village people, stock is an important aspect of our livelihoods, so protecting our stock from the thieves is protecting our livelihoods.

These results are consistent with the assertion of Phillips (2004) that an efficient PWP must have, as its key objective, the provision of quality public goods and services “needed by the community” and lead to an increase in income transfer and “provide dignity to the marginalised communities and reduce alienation”. The participants clearly stated that their dignity was compromised because they had to endure the distress that each day, men, women and children have to undress to cross the river, whether it is winter or summer. They felt estranged from their communities because services (such healthcare and police services) were not timeously received, as was the case with other villages across the river, due to the longer road they needed to travel. In fact, one participant went further and said:

We regard ourselves as being neglected because services are provided to those across the river, and we are not considered on the other side of the river. This created a division and tension between members of the community.

Another participant added:

The river divided the community and made it two separate communities – the one which has facilities and the one that is unable to access its own facilities, such as schools and clinics, despite the fact that these facilities were built for the whole community, not for the segment that was across the river.

These results show that the absence of good public road infrastructure prohibited other state organs from effectively delivery services to these communities. However, the construction of these roads and bridges improved government service delivery in these areas, as revealed by these participants. The services that communities struggled to receive are now accessible through the improved road infrastructure and construction of new bridges. They close the artificial divide between these communities (as one participant put it) caused by the rivers running through the communities. As observed by Devereux and Solomon (2006), PWP infrastructure improvement has a multiplier effect

on service delivery and economic improvement in the community. These authors contend that infrastructure improvement, such as roads, maintenance of canals, irrigation systems, water conservation and improvement in the land, enhanced agriculture production, improved incomes, and delivery of services in developing countries. In support of this assertion by Devereux and Solomon (2009), one participant remarked that since the construction of the bridges in their community, the Department of Education has introduced scholar transport:

Something [happened] we never thought [...] will ever happen in our community. We used to hear about government-sponsored scholar transport on the media. Today, our children receive such government service.

The research participants continued to cite some of the services that have since improved as a result of the improved road infrastructure and the construction of new bridges. One participant intimated that:

[A] mobile clinic is now able to service the whole community equally, and community healthcare workers who support the old and those who are ill are now able to easily visit all the members of [the] community, not [only a] certain portion of the community, and provide the service faster.

While another participant stated:

People of old age and those receiving [a] social grant are able to easily go to pay-points to receive their state-provided grant, without paying extra transport cost to reach pay-points due to [a] diverted road.

Looking at these results in relation to the PTE and the Logical Framework Model in Figure 7 above as the theoretical frameworks for this study, one can draw inferences on the outcomes and impact of the assets created through the EPWP on other government service delivery, particularly those linked to road infrastructure and bridges. These results support what Gehrke and Hartwig (2015:45) call the “double-dividends” of a programme for a community, meaning that the programme does not only deliver physical infrastructure and jobs. The research went beyond to look at how the infrastructure contributed to community livelihoods and service delivery. This study refers to this as *the external effect and outward-looking paradigm of a programme*.

This section focused on questions about the created assets and their support to other government service delivery imperatives. The next question concentrated on the created assets and their contribution, if any, to curbing community livelihood shocks.

6.1.3.5 Created Assets with Benefits for Communities and Improved Wellbeing

This theme was derived from the responses received from the research participants when they were asked about how the assets created through the EPWP assisted their communities. To analyse their responses, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (discussed in Chapter 4) was used.

When it comes to the contribution of the EPWP-created assets to the community and their livelihoods, all the interviewed participants in this category applauded the contribution of the constructed road infrastructure and the bridges to their livelihoods. They cited various examples and areas where the Programme benefited their community. One participant said:

Community members are no longer losing valuable work hours or days due to bridges overflowing and [having] to find alternative routes to go to work, which often took longer and [was] more expensive. As a result, they also save their money.

In support of this statement, another participant said:

Community members who have moved out from their homes and rented rooms in areas across the river, they now have returned to their homes and spending every day with their families and also saving [on] the rental expenses. Considering that these communities are mostly dependent on farms, this saving goes a long way.

Another participant pointed out that some community members survive by selling the produce that they farm in their fields. During the rainy season, it was difficult and expensive to transport their produce to the markets in town. But now with the improved road infrastructure and the construction of new bridges, they are able to transport and sell their produce easily and better support their families. The savings from rental and travelling costs for community members positively contributed to improving their financial assets and their living conditions. The constructed infrastructure has yielded positive results for members of the community and their livelihoods. Financial assets are one of the five key sustainable livelihood assets. This means saving on transport and rental costs resulted in improved income, as the community members could now transport their produce cheaper to the market and not spend more on rent. These were also important livelihood outcomes achieved through the EPWP construction projects, thereby improving the well-being of the community. Community members could now spend their financial resources in other areas where they could improve their livelihoods. As mentioned during the interviews with the EPWP workers, they spend their income on improving their physical assets, such as building their houses and buying furniture and house appliances in order to improve their well-being and that of their families.

The research participants further pointed out other areas where these constructed roads and bridges assisted their communities. One participant indicated that during the implementation of these projects, community members who were employed in the projects received training. This skills development contributed to improving their human capital, which is another key sustainable livelihood asset. This means that after the projects have ended, these workers could use the acquired skills to get other employment opportunities, thereby increasing their income as well as their well-being and food security, as the framework outlines, according Sati (2014). The previous section supported this assertion where the interviewed EPWP workers used their acquired skills to get piece jobs in their communities and improve their income and well-being. These results are consistent with the assertion in the EPWP Mid-Term Review (2008) and McCord (2005) and Lal et al. (2010), who noted that training and skills development within the EPWP have a great potential to increase the employability of the project participants after they exited the Programme. As one interviewed participant said:

I did not have these skills before. I am able to do my job properly and also use my skills to get piece jobs in my community. People hire me to do carpentry or paving in their homes. My skills assist me to survive and earn a living.

6.1.3.6 Summary of the Findings from Key Community Informants

This subsection of this chapter focused on the analysis and discussion of the results from the third and last category of the research participants, the key community informants. The analysis and discussion concentrated on the main themes informed by the questions asked to these participants during one-on-one interviews. These themes are summarised below in Figure 11.

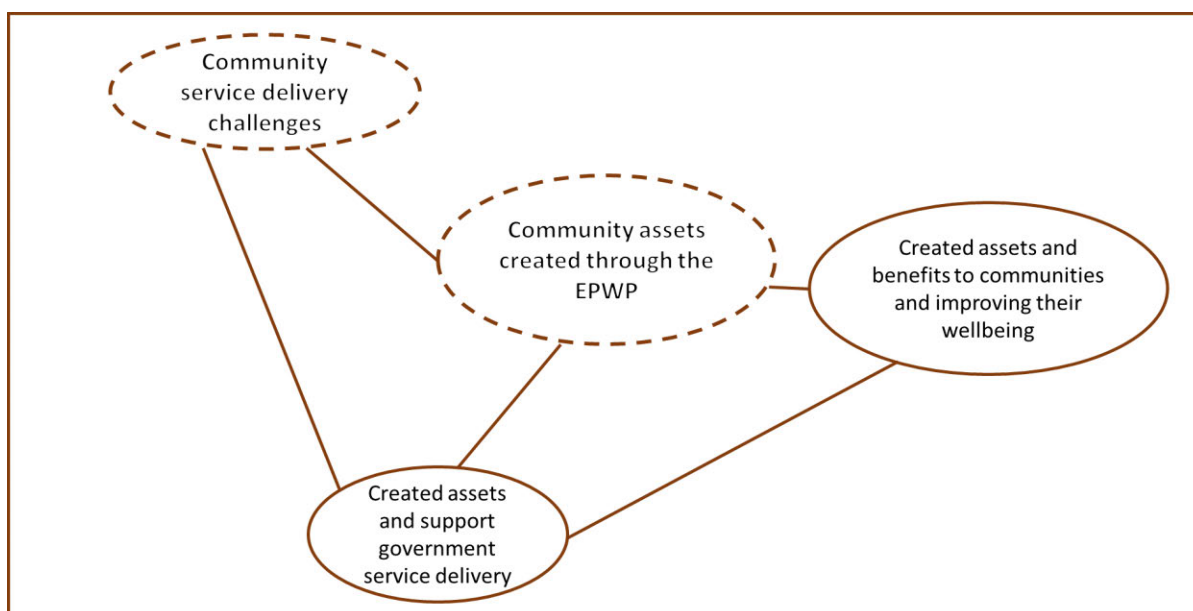


Figure 11: Graphic representation of study themes: Key community informants

This subsection first looked at the demographic information of research participants and their role in the community. Out of 11 key community informants interviewed, eight (61%) are males and three (39%) are females. In terms of their role in the community, the majority (six individuals or 54%) were ward councillors, followed by two (18%) ward committee members, and one school principal, community business leader, and community activist (9%) each. These research participants represent a good mixture of key community role players compared to focusing on one segment of the society, who may provide a one-sided view based on their role in the community, as observed by Saunders (2012:51), who noted that the diversity of key informants is critical in any study to ensure that one captures a wide range of responses and different perspectives from people representing various sectors of society. This ensures that one does not end up with biased or one-sided results.

Secondly, this subsection looked at the community assets created through the EPWP. As noted in the study demarcation (section 1.7), this study was focused on two key programmes in the EPWP Infrastructure Sector, which are the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme. Three types of assets created or maintained through the EPWP were identified by all the participants, and they were road maintenance, road construction, and bridge construction.

Furthermore, various themes emerged from the participants' responses and are discussed in this section, starting with community service delivery challenges and livelihood shocks. Under this theme, the various highlighted challenges that the community encountered before the construction of these infrastructure assets were drownings of school children in the river and inhuman conditions, where both adults and children had to undress half-naked every day to cross the river to access services such as schools, healthcare facilities, and transport on the other side of the river. Another theme that was discussed was the created assets and support to other government service delivery imperatives. Under this theme, the study revealed that the assets created through the EPWP positively contributed to improving service delivery by government. Examples cited by some of the research participants were the introduction of scholar transport, due to the improved road infrastructure and new bridges that closed the gaps between communities divided by the river. Another example was easy access to health services, such as mobile clinics and healthcare workers. Ambulances and police services are now easily reaching all community members with improved turnaround times.

The last theme that was discussed in this section was how the created assets help overcome community livelihood shocks. Participants applauded the Programme for its contribution in improving their livelihoods. They indicated that community members are no longer losing their valuable work hours or days due to bridges overflowing and having to find alternative routes to go to work, which often took longer and cost more money. As a result, they also saved money. Furthermore, the training and skills development provided to workers in the Programme assisted them by increasing their chances of getting employment, while others indicated that they were able to get piece jobs in their communities and earn a living.

6.2 Conclusion

Research is regarded as a logical and systematic approach that seeks first-hand, valuable information and evidence on a specific subject or area. In conducting research, one needs to follow a particular approach using different techniques referred to as research methodologies. A qualitative research methodology was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for this study, in line with the study objectives. This chapter presents the results and analysis of this study, which are the result of interviews and data obtained from three categories of research participants. The first category was the EPWP workers, also known as EPWP participants, followed by the government officials working in the EPWP, and the last category was key community informants. This study was conducted in three provinces of South Africa, which are KZN, the Eastern Cape and Free State, focusing on the two key programmes implemented under the EPWP, which are the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme.

The primary aim of this study was to critically examine and evaluate the role of EPWP in contributing to service delivery and livelihoods of rural communities in South Africa. This aim was captured under these three broad objectives:

- 1) To understand the impact of the assets created through the EPWP on service delivery and the livelihoods of communities.
- 2) To establish the contribution of the Programme to individual participants.
- 3) To assess the Programme's implementation challenges and how they can be addressed.

The study used PTE and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as the theoretical frameworks in the analyses. The results from the three categories of research participants demonstrated various insights

as outlined below.

With the EPWP participants, the study revealed that the majority (72%) of the workers are females, which corresponds well with the gender EPWP target, and the remaining 28% are males, while 44% constituted youths between 18 and 35 years of age. When it comes to the rate of pay, the study revealed that all the workers in the Programme were paid in cash, not in kind, as is the case in other PEPs implemented in other countries.

But the major discovery was that 80% of the interviewed workers are paid less than the regulated minimum wage, which is a major concern, since the EPWP is a government programme and the state is the custodian of legislation. However, the findings show that a state-driven programme is not complying with the legislation, and this is rather concerning, also considering that the key objective of the EPWP is a job creation and poverty alleviation initiative. Furthermore, the study established that the Programme directly and indirectly contributed to participants and their families attaining education through the wages received from the Programme. The interviewed EPWP participants expressed that the Programme assisted them in supporting their families in various forms but the most prevalent support was through the provision of food. The study results also revealed that all the interviewed EPWP workers found the Programme to have positively contributed to their psychological and emotional well-being. This emanates from the fact that all these workers were unemployed before they joined the Programme and their lives and livelihoods of their families were in a very bad state, which affected them emotionally and psychologically. Furthermore, with the EPWP workers, the study found that the Programme has provided great relief in terms of food security for the workers and their families. The analyses went further and revealed that more than 70% of the interviewed participants indicated that the Programme assisted them to improve their shelter in different ways and forms, such as building new structures, renovations and repairing their homes. This is important as shelter forms part of the five key livelihood assets (physical assets), which are critical in achieving improved livelihood outcomes and improved well-being.

Looking at the second category of research participants: government officials working on the EPWP Programme, the study revealed a lack of transparency in the recruitment of EPWP workers as very concerning, especially when it came to the involvement of ward councillors. Another area of concern cited by the government officials was insufficient financial and human resources as one of the impediments in the implementation of the Programme, especially from the local sphere of government. A smaller percentage of participants were of the view that most EPWP implementing bodies focused on the EPWP incentive grant provided by the DPWI as the sole funding source for the Programme, yet there are various streams of funding provided by National Treasury (NT), such as equitable shares, municipal infrastructure grants (for a municipality), provincial road maintenance grants, and other grants provided by NT. Furthermore, the study revealed that a lack of planning and stakeholder engagements and compliance with programme processes and procedures formed part of the major challenges affecting the implementation of the EPWP. This included a lack of programme understanding and commitment, especially at senior management levels, both politically and administratively. Lack of youth participation in the Programme came out as another key concerning area in the EPWP. Some reasons cited associated with this low youth participation rate are the low stipend; stigma associated with the Programme; and the nature of EPWP projects. Additionally, the study revealed that the lack of the overarching EPWP policy and enforcement mechanism and inadequate management and keeping of project records were major challenges for the Programme.

The last category of research participants, the key community informants, include eight (61%) males and three (39%) females. In terms of their role in the community, the majority (six individuals or

54%) were ward councillors, followed by two (18%) ward committee members, and one school principal, community business leader, and community activist (9%) each. The study highlighted various challenges that the community encountered before the construction of the EPWP infrastructure assets, such as drownings of school children in the river and inhuman conditions where both adults and children had to undress half naked every day to cross the river in order to access services, such as schools, healthcare facilities, and transport on the other side of the river. The study revealed that the assets created through the EPWP positively contributed to improving service delivery by government. Examples cited by some of the research participants were the introduction of scholar transport, due to the improved road infrastructure and new bridges, which also closed the gaps between communities divided by the river. Another example is easy access to health services, such as mobile clinics and healthcare workers. Ambulances and police services are now easily reaching community members with improved turnaround times. Lastly, the participants in this category applauded the Programme for its contribution to improving their livelihoods. They indicated that community members were no longer losing valuable work hours or days due to bridges overflowing and having to find alternative routes to work, which often took longer and cost more money. As a result, they also saved their money. Furthermore, the training and skills development provided to workers in the Programme assisted them by increasing their chances of getting employment, while others indicated that they were able to get piece jobs in their communities and earn a living. The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings, recommendations, and conclusion for this study.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

This study aimed to critically examine and evaluate the role of PEPs and their contribution to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa. It was conducted in three provinces of South Africa, which are KZN, the Eastern Cape and Free State, targeting two key programmes implemented under the EPWP, i.e. the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme and Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme, discussed in section 5.2.2 above. As articulated in Chapter 1, the literature revealed that studies conducted on PEPs in general and the EPWP, in particular, focused on the summative and quantitative value of the Programme in terms of the number of job opportunities created and the interest of the stakeholders (Heradien, 2013). In the recent past, there has been very limited critical review of the qualitative impact of the EPWP and the experience of communities and their livelihoods, hence the need for this study.

The foregoing chapters presented the contextual background of PEPs, global and South African perspectives, and outlined the theoretical framework and the research methodology employed in the study. The previous chapter (Chapter 6) presented the study findings in line with the research questions and objectives. The highlights of the study findings were that for the EPWP workers, there was a noticeable improvement in their human capital, financial capital, physical capital, and social capital emanating from their involvement in the Programme. Similar results were also registered from key informants, who stated that the introduction of the Programme in their communities had addressed some critical social and economic challenges they faced. For example, children were now crossing the river safely using a bridge and community members were no longer subject to inhumane conditions where they had to undress to cross the river to access services, such as schools, healthcare facilities, and transport, on the other side of the river.

Notwithstanding these positive sentiments from EPWP workers and key community informants, the government officials highlighted some challenges to the implementation of the EPWP. Some of these challenges include the lack of transparency in the recruitment of EPWP workers, especially when it comes to the involvement of ward councillors. Another area of concern and impediment to implementing the Programme cited by the government officials is insufficient financial and human resources. In particular, the study noted concerns regarding the local sphere of government, a lack of planning and stakeholder engagement, and a lack of compliance with programme processes and procedures. In addition, the study notes a lack of programme understanding and commitment at senior management levels, both politically and administratively.

Using the theoretical framework adopted as the foundation for this study and the literature consulted, this chapter delivers the overall conclusion of the study, covering what was described by the researcher in Chapter 6. To draw the overall conclusions for this study, the researcher used the main research questions outlined in Chapter 1. The first part of this chapter addressed the question: “How does the EPWP, as a PEP, contribute to the delivery of public services in rural areas?” The second part then looked at the question of: “How are the livelihoods of the beneficiaries or employees of the EPWP affected by the Programme?” The third part of this chapter addressed the questions on the implementation challenges of the EPWP and how they could be resolved, followed by the study theoretical analysis. Finally, concluding remarks and recommendations are presented based on the researcher’s observations in response to the key objectives of the study and its contribution to the

body of knowledge in the public administration discipline.

7.1 The Contribution of the EPWP to the Delivery of Public Services in Rural Areas

The EPWP is a nationwide government-led programme aimed to “provide work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through labour-intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development”, EPWP (2019:23). Before implementing the Programme, research participants cited various challenges in their communities, including difficulty accessing public services and facilities, such as schools, healthcare (especially during the Covid-19 pandemic), and police services (especially with the increase in gender-based violence), during rainy seasons. This study looked into the EPWP’s contribution to the delivery of public services in rural areas from two perspectives: the community and the government.

On the community side, the study revealed that the EPWP has been used as a delivery mechanism in the development and construction of low-cost Bailey bridges and the maintenance of roads in rural communities to improve safe access to basic services, such as schools, clinics, police stations and other service providers, such as SASSA. The community applauded the Programme for contributing to changing their lives, as there has been improvement in the services they receive. It further averted the risk of children drowning when they tried to cross the river to and from school and brought dignity to those men and women who had to undress every day during rainy seasons to cross the river. From these examples, one concludes that the Programme contributed to the delivery of public services to rural communities. These results can be related to the assertion by Phillips (2004:21) on effectual PWPs which must have, as their key objective, the provision of good-quality public goods and services “needed by the community”, they must enable a temporary increase in income transfer, and “provide dignity to the marginalised communities and reduce alienation”. The community is now enjoying easy access to key amenities through the infrastructure developed by the EPWP. This is further unpacked and elaborated on in section 7.2 below on the impact of the Programme on the livelihoods of participants.

On the government side, the study ascertained that the construction of these bridges by the EPWP has been instrumental in addressing the unjust apartheid spatial system, which created homelands characterised by a lack of access to community and social facilities, such as schools, clinics, hospitals, police stations, courts and post offices and many other amenities, during rainy periods due to impassable river crossings, as noted by Fourie (2006:28). In doing so, the government is positively responding to the call of the 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, which made service delivery as one of the key priorities of the four government programmes outlined in the RDP: 1) meeting basic needs; 2) urban and rural development; 3) democratisation and institutional reform; and 4) economic restructuring (Government of South Africa, 1994). As noted by Tonon (2018:3), a public service delivery mechanism has been regarded as an important intervention by the state to reduce inequality in South Africa.

Still on the government side, the study further revealed that the assets created through the EPWP positively contributed to improving service delivery by the government. An example cited by some of the research participants was the introduction of scholar transport in their communities, something that has never happened before. The improved road infrastructure and new bridges in their communities resulted in the DBE in the province introducing scholar transport to accommodate all learners in the community and close the gaps between communities divided by the river.

This study findings are in line with Gehrke and Hartwig (2015:45), who argue that PWPs, if well

managed and implemented, have the potential to provide what they referred to as “double dividends”. This means that they not only provide employment and reduce poverty, but PWP’s also contribute to the improvement of community infrastructure and delivery of public goods and services. This finding led to the conclusion that the EPWP, as a PEP, assisted government in the delivery of public services in rural communities, and using the EPWP as an implementation model to develop public infrastructure, government was able to create jobs and deliver the needed public infrastructure which opened doors for additional services to be brought closer to communities. Government, as noted by the research participants, is able to provide other services, which were difficult to provide to communities in the past as a result of the previous poor road conditions. Examples are easy access to health services, such as mobile clinics and healthcare workers. Ambulances and police services are now easily reaching all community members with improved turnaround times compared to before the infrastructure was built.

7.2 The Effect of the EPWP on the Livelihoods of Participants

In assessing the impact of the EPWP on the lives and livelihood of the workers and participants, the study revealed a positive impact and contribution in various areas. These areas are grouped along the five key Sustainable Livelihood Framework assets, among others, as outlined below.

- **Human capital:** Research participants cited different ways in which the Programme improved their human capital in the form of skills development. One of them was the direct attainment of training, which the researcher refers to as a “direct contribution” to improving human capital. Training in the Programme, according to the EPWP (2019:11), is promoted to “provide a sound basis for sustainable livelihood opportunities in communities” during and after the participants have exited the Programme. Capacity building and skills development are recognised as a vital intervention in the EPWP to ensure that when people exit the programmes, they leave with a particular skill obtained through the EPWP.

It is worth noting that during EPWP Phase I (2004-2009), training was made compulsory for every work opportunity created, and this was a fundamental point of departure in the first phase, as it recognised the role played by training to improve the livelihood of project participants when they exit the Programme. This is consistent with the assertion by Abedian and Standish (1986) on the importance of PWPs. The authors attributed this to the ability of the Programme to provide employment and training to project participants.

However, when one looks at the later phases of the Programme (i.e., Phase II, Phase III and the current phase, Phase IV), the compulsory training was relaxed, and it became no longer compulsory but critical, which means training can be implemented based on the availability of funding. This means training is no longer prioritised as it was during the first phase of the EPWP.

The findings of this study indicate that this decision of relaxing training in the EPWP has been carried out but training should ideally be made compulsory again, if the Programme is to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, government needs to consider reversing the decision to downgrade the status of EPWP training from compulsory for every work opportunity to critical and based on the availability of funding. Study participants have shown how the training has positively impacted their livelihoods. As one participant stated, “With

the training I received, I am able to sew items for my community and generate additional income”. Another interview participant indicated that he did not have these skills before, but with the training received from the Programme, he was able to do his job properly and he also uses his skills to get piece jobs in his community. People hire him to do carpentry or paving in their homes. He was adamant that the attained skills assisted him in surviving and earning a living for himself and his family.

These results are consistent with previous findings, including McCord (2005), the EPWP Mid-Term Review (2008), and Lal et al. (2010), who noted that training and skills development within the EPWP has a great potential to increase employability of the project participants after they exit the Programme, and that accredited training linked to exit opportunities should be provided to participants.

The second contribution of the EPWP to human capital, as cited by research participants, is through the indirect attainment of knowledge and skills, which the researcher refers to it as an “indirect contribution” to improving human capital because it is not the training the EPWP workers received directly from the Programme. It was training that the workers attained using the proceeds from the Programme to further their studies. As one participant said, through the money she received from the Programme, she was able to register at a tertiary institution to further her studies. Another participant remarked that through the money she received from the Programme, she was able to support her children who were at university. Even though she was not paying for the tuition fees and other related costs, she was able to send money to her children and support them with other needs, and this made her a happy parent and feel good. Therefore, one can conclude that these are clear signs and indications that the Programme, directly and indirectly, contributed to the improvement of human capital, particularly the skills of the participants, as envisaged by the EPWP (2019:11).

- **Financial capital:** This is the second Sustainable Livelihood Framework asset (in the form of income) cited by research participants that the Programme positively contributed to. There was a great deal of appreciation for the income received by all the participants (100%), who said that the Programme improved their level of income, since all of them were unemployed and had no income before joining the Programme. Through the income received from the Programme, participants indicated that they were now able to fulfil other household needs, such as buying food for their families (improved food security). With the high levels of poverty and unemployment, food security is at the core of PEP objectives. McCord (2005) thus asserted that PWPs have become an important and widely used social protection tool during a state of prolonged and severe poverty and unemployment.

Despite this praise by the EPWP workers, when one looks closer at the actual payments and the rate of pay for these workers, the study exhibited mixed responses. One of the concerning findings was that 80% of the interviewed participants were paid less than the regulated EPWP wage rate of R95.44 (equivalent to R1 908.80 per month, when one works five days per week), as provided for in the Ministerial Determination 4: EPWP 2012 (Government of South Africa, 2012) and the NMW Act, as amended (Government of South Africa, 2018). This legislation sets out the wage floor for all EPWP workers, and nobody should be paid less than this minimum wage rate. These findings are rather concerning as a government programme is not complying with government legislation on minimum wage. It gives a bad name to the government, especially when one also considers the objectives of the Programme to alleviate

poverty and contribute to development. Furthermore, the enforcement of the legislation in the private sector becomes difficult for government if it is not complying first.

Another finding was the delay of payments to the EPWP workers. Some participants indicated that sometimes it took up to 60 days before they received the wages. This statement was further supported by the government officials interviewed in this study on the challenges affecting the Programme. They also said that cash flow challenges experienced by EPWP implementing bodies result in the delays in payment of wages. Furthermore, internal processes and systems have a major role when it comes to delayed payment of wages to EPWP workers. As a result, it is not clear when wages will be received. It is always guesswork, and workers must take a wait-and-see approach. When workers do not receive their payments, they stop working, and this affects project timelines and service delivery.

Wages paid to EPWP workers form an integral part of improving their livelihoods, as evident in both the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and PTE. Financial capital is one of the five key assets to “overcome stress and shocks” of rural livelihood systems, as Mubangizi (2020:18) affirms. Paying workers their wages late defeats the objective of the Programme of providing income support to poor and unemployed people, thereby improving their livelihoods. When the income is unpredictable, as participants have indicated, it negatively affects the financial planning and financial commitment of the workers. They could not commit to buying more durable items for their households, such as furniture and other items, because when you regularly miss a payment on such items, they are repossessed.

Furthermore, the workers cited an additional challenge that they experience, which is a setback in their income due to transport costs. Of the interviewed workers, 25% indicated that they spent close to 40% of their income on transport costs alone, as some have to take two taxis in a single trip to reach their workplace. These results are inconsistent with the applicable EPWP guidelines. For example, the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines of 2018 (EPWP, 2017) and the Government of South Africa (2012) state that “Workers of the EPWP projects should be locally-based (as close to the project site as possible)”. The criteria were introduced specifically to ensure that workers, if practically possible, walk to their project sites and don’t spend money on transportation to guarantee that their income is spent on household and personal needs. Working closer to home was also found critical Hartwig (2013) and Lavers (2016) in the Rwanda VUP to ensure an increase in the participation of women. The high transportation costs for workers whose projects are far from their place of residence are self-defeating for the Programme, considering that the wage rate is still very low, as discussed above, and it was set up with the principle of working closer to workers’ place of residence and thus no transportation costs were factored in.

This leads one to conclude that despite the appreciation and applause of the Programme by its workers, especially with its contribution to increasing the level of income, thereby improving their financial capital assets, government has been amiss on various fronts. Some of these are the payment of a wage rate below the minimum wage by some programmes; delayed payments which cost the workers some opportunities to better their situation; and finally, lack of planning, which resulted in recruiting workers staying far from the projects, which resulted in them paying too much of their small income on transport.

- **Physical capital:** More than 70% the research participants cited various forms of physical capital assets acquired through the income received from the Programme. The study concludes that the Programme has positively assisted the workers in obtaining important assets for themselves and their families from the proceeds of the EPWP. Among the key assets attained or improved was housing or shelter. As most participants come from impoverished households, their shelter was predominantly mud structures with not more than two rooms. It was not surprising that the majority prioritised their shelter for improvement, which is a major step towards achieving improved livelihood outcomes, as Sati (2014) avers. This is also consistent with the assertion by Vangchhia and Sati (2016:38) that physical assets in the form of shelter are a foundation to “improve the means of living”.

Besides building shelters, there were other different forms of physical assets that the EPWP workers were able to acquire to improve their livelihoods. As one participant indicated, through the income he received from the Programme, he bought the fence for his garden to ensure livestock did not destroy his garden and crops, as these crops were critical for food security in his household. Other participants indicated that they bought furniture, such as stoves, fridges, beds, etc. (One person mentioned that she never had a bed in her life, and she was able to buy her first bed. You could identify her sense of pride from how she explained her story.)

By listening to personal stories shared by the research participants, one can really conclude that beyond the physical assets attained, a sense of dignity and pride was restored to the participants. Some shared unspeakable stories about their lives before joining the EPWP. This was evident when one participant could not hold her emotion back as she shared her story. She said that they used to stay in a one-room house with her four children and her husband. These children were in their teens or older. They used a curtain to separate the area in the house where the parents sleep from the children’s area. There was no privacy between the parents and the kids, and even among the kids themselves, as some are girls and others are boys. But since she started working in the Programme and had a predictable income, she applied for a bank loan to buy building materials and extend her house. There is now privacy in the house and dignity restored.

Some of the assets attained by these participants created additional opportunities for them. One such asset is a cellphone. More than 80% (the majority youths) of the interviewed participants said among the personal items (assets) they acquired through the income from the Programme were cellphones. Again, this is not a new phenomenon, as stated by Vaidya et al. (2016). The use of cellphone technologies is credited for its ability to bring the world together due to the convenience it provides in communication and interaction between people across the world through calling, texting, and Internet connections, such as through social media and others. This study by Vaidya et al. (2016:6) revealed that young people between the ages of 15 and 25 years are the majority of the users of cellphone and smartphone technologies. But besides that, both cellphones and smartphones are very important tools used to communicate in this modern era. The interviewed participants cited that the key usages of their mobile devices include submitting employment applications and CVs, communicating with potential clients for those who were looking for piece jobs in their communities, as well as engaging with their groups as part of social networking. Cellphones have become an important device in human lives in this modern era and it is no coincidence that the EPWP workers, both young and old, are also spending their money on these devices for various reasons. Another

participant indicated that he used his cellphone as a point of contact for all his clients and potential clients who already had his number. Sometimes, he is surprised by phone calls from people received when he does not know where they got his number.

Achieving positive livelihoods outcomes, as noted by Sati (2014:12), depends on the availability of assets and livelihood capitals. These pave the way for additional opportunities. Therefore, the study further concludes that the Programme did not only end at assisting the workers in securing an income and physical capital, but the assets that they acquired have further provided a secondary benefit.

- **Social capital:** This is the fourth asset in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, focusing on what Elasha et al. (2005) referred to as the softer but critical elements of life, which include the social network, support and others. The study analysis revealed that 100% of the interviewed participants attributed their improved social network and support to their participation in the Programme. They claim that these established networks and friendships would have a long-term impact, even for years after the Programme has ended. These established social networks and relationships came in various forms. For example, more than 40% (11) of interviewed participants indicated that they have established their social club, while the remaining 56% (14) said that even though they did not belong to any social club, they have established stronger bonds and relationships with their fellow employees. Through these relationships and bonds established, the participants socialise as human beings, and share ideas and personal experiences in general. One participant explained that through the Programme, she got to know other people, shared experiences, and they learnt from one another. But most importantly, she knew that she was not alone whenever she came across some challenges. This is supported by Golla et al. (2011:6), who note that relationships are created and enhanced between the members of a community who work in a programme. This creates a further network outside one's family and household. Jones et al. (2010a:2) refer to these as intangible gains provided by the programme and they also included psychological security during times of crisis, when members know that they can rely on their network for support and assistance.

The study has shown the positive impact of the creation of this intangible asset on the participants of the EPWP and their social lives. This led to the conclusion that the Programme has been able to achieve positive results in contributing to and improving the social capital of the participants, an important sustainable livelihood asset, as noted by Elasha et al. (2005). One participant attested that the Programme provided an opportunity for her to meet other like-minded men and women, interact with them, and share ideas and life experiences. She further indicated that they talked about many issues as colleagues, from the household and relationship issues to social events, what is happening in the country politically, socially and economically, and healthcare matters, including the Covid-19 pandemic. This created a bond with other workers, who would have ordinarily stayed at home without anything to do. These social networks assist them in dealing with life shocks and stresses. Gilbert (2019), cited in Pillay et al. (2021), noted that human beings by nature long for connection and feelings of being accepted, cared for, and knowing that there is support available and there is someone who will be there for you during times of need. This gave them comfort, validation, and a

sense of belonging and self-worth. In other words, it gave them the feeling of not being alone in the challenges that they might go through.

Furthermore, Berkman and Syme (1979) and Ruberman et al. (1984), cited by Pillay et al. (2021:19), also contend that studies have shown that a community, in the form of a social network, offers a shield to its members and those “people with social support are happier, live longer and have significantly less mental and physical health issues”. The study further concludes that through these social networks and relationships established by the participants, the Programme was also able to contribute positively to improving the psycho-social well-being of the members, and this was a direct response to the improvement of social capital, as one of the key sustainable livelihood assets in enhancing the well-being of the EPWP participants.

Those interview participants who formed social clubs and stokvels also said they use them as a vehicle for the members to pull their financial resources together to support one another and improve their well-being, thereby contributing to improved livelihoods. Some remarked that they save this money and split it at the end of the year, and this helps members buy something of higher value, which would not have been possible if there was no club, or they give members loans or rotate payments. Others expressed that they have established burial societies to support members during times of need. This has been helpful, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. One participant stated that she already experienced two deaths in the family, but as a member of a burial society, money was more accessible and she was able to buy food during times of need like this, as well as the group of the ladies from the society, who helped her during the funeral preparations.

These findings affirm the study by Lavers (2016:51), which revealed that by “reducing social shocks and stress, social networks provide a cushion and protection to such disturbances and blows”. In improving the well-being of the participants and their livelihoods, the study concludes that social clubs and networks have proved to be shock absorbers during times of distress and anxiety, and they contributed to improving the well-being of the members.

- **Natural capital:** This refers to stocks of natural assets, such as land, plants and other living things. During the interviews with the participants, none of them indicated the acquisition or attainment of natural capital directly through the proceeds of the EPWP income. This was mainly attributed to two factors. One is the income that they received which was not sufficient to cover other needs. At face value, this may suggest that the asset contribution is not the type that develops into long-term or intergenerational financial security. But looking closer at the acquisition of land, which indicates the second key factor, once again, 100% of the interviewed participants are from rural communities, and they obtained their land from the local traditional leaders. Therefore, there was no need for them to buy land. The study concludes that it was difficult to assess the attainment of this livelihood asset (natural capital) properly, particularly land, which is key in any community, considering these two factors.

7.3 EPWP Implementation Challenges and Ways to Address Them

From the point of view of the government officials who are responsible for the coordination and implementation of the EPWP, the study showed various challenges experienced during the

implementation of the Programme. Some of these challenges are inherent, while others are a result of a lack of compliance with the prescripts governing the EPWP by the implementing bodies. However, their suggestions to address the challenges they experienced in the Programme are promising.

The study concluded that despite the intervention by the National DPW in 2017 to introduce the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines that provided direction and promoted uniformity, fairness, transparency, equity, ethics and consistency in the recruitment of the EPWP workers, these guidelines are flouted, as asserted overwhelmingly by all the participants. The participants identified ward councillors as the main culprits. Examples of the claims by the research participants were that community leaders often dictate who should be appointed on the project, without following the standardised recruitment guidelines, which promote fair and transparent recruitment of project participants. Furthermore, nepotism and partisanship from councillors affect the recruitment of EPWP participants at community levels, despite the clear recruitment guidelines provided by the National DPW on how to go about recruiting EPWP workers.

This shows clear disregard for the rules and processes established for the EPWP and has a direct impact on the objectives of the Programme. In cases where a non-deserving community member has an opportunity, a really needy and well-deserving member is denied that opportunity because they are not connected to the powers that be. The study concludes that there is a failure in the system to ensure that these types of behaviour are detected and eliminated.

The study also revealed that while public bodies were allocated targets for job creation and coordination of the EPWP, departments and municipalities did not meet these targets by ensuring that there is adequate human resource capacity to oversee the Programme. This is also noted by Heradien (2013), citing Kobokane (2007), who found that inadequate skills for designing, coordinating and implementing PEPs is one of the reasons causing a programme to fail or not achieve the intended outcomes. The study concluded that public bodies were not fully prepared to take the responsibility to coordinate and implement the EPWP due to their inability to provide adequate human resources for the Programme. Participants indicated that a lack of effective supervision of the Zibambebe programme, due to a limited staff complement and the number of participants involved in the EPWP, affects the programme reporting. This results in many audit queries due to a lack of portfolios of evidence (POEs) because no one is overseeing the day-to-day running of the programme at site level. This was further noted by Phillips et al. (2009) and Zulu et al. (2017), who state that adequate human resources are a key driver in project implementation. The inadequate human resource capacity to supervise EPWP workers at site level has resulted in many workers being found loitering around or sleeping under the trees. Consequently, in some parts of the Eastern Cape and KZN, the EPWP workers are derogatively referred to as *ocambalala*, a Xhosa word loosely translated as “the ones who sleep”, according to one official.

The study concluded that lack of proper planning was a major challenge for various public bodies. During the study analysis, it was found that the EPWP was not included in the broader plans of the institutions and allocated inadequate resources. Some of the research participants even went on to say that the EPWP was viewed by many in their organisations as an add-on function and not an integral part of the organisation. This leads one to further conclude that some senior officials do not fully appreciate and understand the EPWP and how it should be integrated into the entire organisational programme. As one research participant noted, some in top management of both provincial and local government did not understand the EPWP, they were not involved in the Programme, and they did not see it as part of the projects they must implement. These research participants further noted that sometimes managers say they cannot implement or report some projects because they are not funded

by the EPWP grant, which means, according to their understanding, EPWP projects are only funded through the EPWP grant. This is a clear demonstration of a lack of understanding of the EPWP model and has a direct negative impact on achieving the objectives of the Programme and reporting on jobs it has created.

It is further concluded that the absence of the overarching policy that governs and regulates the EPWP has exacerbated some of the challenges that the Programme experiences. The Programme has been in implementation for more than 15 years (since 2004), yet no policy exists; instead, practice notes and circulars are being. The researcher then deduced that these challenges experienced by implementers of the EPWP can partly be blamed on the absence of an EPWP overreaching policy which should have provided authority to various institutions, such as the National DPW as the overall coordinator of the EPWP, and then guarantee enforcement. Furthermore, the policy would have eliminated the disjuncture and inconsistency that exists in the Programme across public bodies in implementation, be it the issue of the wage rate, the recruitment of the workers, duration of employment, and many other pertinent matters affecting the EPWP. An example was cited by participants representing the local sphere of government where people were discontented about the behaviour of national and provincial departments when they implement their projects at community levels. These participants were critical of these two spheres of government for not aligning the stipend they paid to their project workers with the local wage rate paid by the municipality when they implemented their project at the local level. These participants stated that projects implemented by both provincial and national government paid higher wages than those implemented by municipalities. This creates tension among the local workers, especially those working in municipal-implemented projects, because they are not paid the same wage rate, even if their projects are similar to those implemented by either national or provincial government departments.

When EPWP workers employed at municipal projects discovered that there were new project/s which paid higher wage rates than what they were currently receiving, they demanded the same wage rate from the municipal projects. These demands are aggravated by the fact that community members do not necessarily know the details of whether the project was implemented by the municipality, provincial department or national department. In their eyes, and correctly so, these are all government projects and should be paying the same wage rate. This inconsistency in the rate of pay causes much instability at project site level, including causing delays.

Furthermore, the analysis also revealed that the Programme was struggling to reach its youth employment targets, despite the high level of youth unemployment in the country. The EPWP (2019), in its Phase IV Business Plan (2019-2023), has a target to create 60% of employment opportunities for the youths out of its overall target of five million. This underachievement is concerning, considering that 63.3% of youths are unemployed, according to StatsSA (2021), and using the expanded definition and 43.6% using the narrow definition. Various factors were cited by the research participants for this lack of achievement of the youth target. Chief among those deterrents for youth participation are the low rate of stipends paid to EPWP workers; stigma associated with the Programme because workers are labelled poor and uneducated in the community; and lastly, young people are said to have complained that the EPWP projects are not attractive as they are old, traditional projects done by older people.

As outlined in the above sections, the study analysis showed various challenges experienced during the implementation of the Programme but a positive finding was that during the analysis, there were also suggestions put forward by research participants as mechanisms to address the challenges experienced in the Programme implementation. As a result, the study concludes that increasing of

human resources capacity in public bodies will close the gap that exists, particularly when it comes to capacity. Furthermore, human resources capacity does not only refer to actual people in the organisation, but also to the technical abilities and skills that must be provided to those officials to enable them to coordinate and implement the EPWP properly and adequately in their respective public bodies. The researcher further concluded that the introduction of an EPWP overarching policy will play a pivotal role in bringing everything together in the Programme, including dealing with inconsistency in the wage rates within the same locality, the disjuncture in the recruitment of the workers and the duration of projects, providing clear roles and responsibilities for all involved in the Programme, and also punitive measures for those who do not comply. Lastly, to introduce interventions and programmes to promote the participation of youth in the EPWP Projects is recommended for the Programme to achieve its targets and contribute to a reduction in the high youth unemployment rate in the country.

7.4 Theoretical Analysis of Research Conclusions

As noted above, this study focused on critically examining and evaluating the role of PEPs and their contribution to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa. It was premised on two theories: Program Theory Evaluation (PTE) and Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as the theoretical frameworks.

Post-1994, the South African Government introduced various interventions and measures to address the structural imbalances of the apartheid legacy. These interventions aimed to create employment opportunities for the majority of citizens, improve the infrastructure, as well as bringing critical services, especially to the areas that were neglected by the apartheid government. The EPWP, as a South African PEP, is one of those interventions that were introduced during that time. Since then, the Programme has evolved over the years, as explained in Chapter 2 (section 2.3). It started as the National Public Works Programme (NPWP), was redesigned to become the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP), and in 2004, it was further reoriented and remodelled into the EPWP we currently know. However, as much as the Programme has evolved over time, its core founding objectives, such as job creation and poverty reduction, have not been changed. Phillips (2004) has contended that PWPs tend to receive wide criticism and are often referred to as “make-work” programmes that involve unproductive activities. He refuted this general and sweeping claim by arguing that a distinction must be made between unproductive and productive PWPs, where the latter is focused on the provision of good-quality public goods and services needed by the community. This is supported by Devereux and Solomon (2006), who found that PWPs have assisted in improving agricultural production due to infrastructure built, such as roads, the maintenance of canals, irrigation systems, water conservation, and improvement in the land (i.e. prevention of soil erosion and removal of alien vegetation). Furthermore, the evidence provided by Devereux and Solomon (2006) suggests that workers in PWPs tend to invest their income in agricultural activities partly, such as purchasing fertilisers and enhancing their domestic and subsistence production to improve food security.

The findings in this study corroborate the assertion by these authors on the impact of the EPWP on the livelihoods of the workers. A conclusion was made based on the strong evidence from this study which suggests that the Programme has positively contributed to the improvement of community assets (roads and bridges), which resulted in a multiplier effect, as other public services that were not easily accessible by the community are now accessible. On top of that, additional services which were never provided before were introduced to the community due to the bridges and the road infrastructure build. This achievement is postulated by Gehrke and Hartwig (2015:38) as the “*double-dividends*” of a programme for the community. This is one of the outstanding features the EPWP has shown in

terms of its impact. These are positive results comparable to other PEPs (discussed in Chapter 2), such as *Bolsa Verde* of Brazil, *Pago por Servicios Ambientales* in Costa Rica, and *Socio Bosque* in Ecuador. These were forestry protection programmes through which jobs were created, but the impact the programmes had on these countries was not only through job creation and income transfer, but also the positive impact on climate change, with millions of trees planted and millions of hectares of forest maintained, as the studies revealed. Thus a correlation is drawn between the EPWP and other PEPs, especially on the multiplier effect of the Programme.

A further conclusion is made that the theoretical position upon which the EPWP was implemented matches the results of the implementation and outcomes of the Programme. More specifically, the PTE, as Heradien (2013:12) explains, “Assists one to measure whether or not the programme was able to achieve the intended outcomes or impact”. The objectives of the EPWP is to provide public goods and services needed by the community, thereby contributing to development. It is important to understand the theoretical imperatives underpinning this study from the side of the community, whose needs are clear: the delivery of improved community assets and services, saving cost and time, and finally, improving safety. This was a clear social problem that the community faced, which needed action from government to address, and the EPWP was used as a tool to address this challenge. Following the assertion of Donaldson (2003:114) that PTE is regarded as “a common understanding of how a program is presumed to solve the social problem(s)”, the study analysis has shown that the EPWP contributed to addressing the social challenges experienced by the community. The researcher could, therefore, conclude that the Programme, in line with this framework, was able to improve the level of safety of community members as they were no longer exposed to the danger of crossing overflowing rivers due to the absence of bridges and a social challenge was addressed. Furthermore, the study concludes that community members saved time and money as they were no longer travelling long distances and spending extra money on transport to reach their places of work during the rainy season. It was noted by the participants that during rainy days, community members, including children going to school, had to find alternative ways to reach their destination. These alternatives were costly and time-consuming.

As Wilder Research (2009:33) noted, a good programme theory shows that change in a programme does not just happen, but takes place in stages. The study analysis showed that there were various steps and processes that were followed for the Programme to achieve these results, as one participant indicated:

At local government level, [the] community is consulted at the IDP Forums and when the project has to be implemented, communities are engaged at project planning stages until the site establishment stage, implementation until the handover stage.

These assertions by the research participant form part of the important components of the framework (Figure 7), which includes *inputs*, which are seen here as the contribution by community members in addressing their problem, and *activities*, which include stakeholder engagements, project identification, and sourcing of participants. The framework also includes *outputs*. For the specific project, this included the handover of bridges, income received by workers, as well as the attained skills. The last process, which has been alluded to above, is the *outcome*, as further highlighted by Heradien (2013:12).

The model, having outlined the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, or impact of the Programme, failed to acknowledge that programmes and projects do not always follow a linear route. As part of prescribing the above model indicators, a built-in risk factor that will include risk identification and

risk mitigation must be incorporated into the framework, and it must be addressed at the input and activity phases, as they would have a direct effect on the Programme output and outcomes alike. Therefore, the researcher is of the view that without the embedded risk assessment indicator, the model is incomplete.

The study also revealed that there was a positive change brought about by the EPWP for the lives and livelihoods of the EPWP participants. The analysis of this category of participants was underpinned by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Sati and Vangchhia (2016:32), citing Chambers and Conway (1992a, b), view sustainable livelihoods as:

the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihoods for the next generation and which contributes net benefit to other livelihoods at local and global levels and in the short and long term.

The study analysis revealed various types of livelihood assets the research participants were able to attain directly and indirectly through their participation in the Programme. Looking at the objectives of the EPWP of providing income support to the poor and thereby contributing to development. The Programme was able to deliver income support (financial capital), which is one of the critical assets in the framework. The research participants outlined various ways in which they used their financial capital to improve their livelihoods and that of their families. As noted above, one participant said that their family comprised 13 members and some of these members are school-going children but nobody was employed. The money received is used to buy food, school uniforms and clothes for the kids at Christmas, and through this money, no one goes to bed on an empty stomach anymore in the family.

The theoretical understanding of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was further explained by Sati (2014:16), who asserted that a livelihood is sustainable if it improve the conditions and well-being of the community, household or individual, decrease their vulnerability, increase food security and enhance the use of natural resources base. The ability of the participants to be independent of handouts from their neighbours was a direct contribution to their dignity. The same dignity was restored to women and girls as to men in those communities, as they were no longer expected to undress half-naked each time to cross the river. After the bridges were constructed, everybody moved freely and safely. The social, psychological and emotional well-being of these participants were positively impacted, as the study found. This has been outlined by the researcher in Chapter 1 as outward looking and external effect paradigms of the EPWP to communities and their livelihoods. This effect goes beyond counting the number of job opportunities created through the Programme, but deals with the sustainable livelihoods impact from the different assets obtained and improved. In the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, Serrat (2017) noted that achieving a positive state of psychological and emotional well-being forms an important part of achieving good livelihood outcomes, particularly in reducing emotional vulnerability. This was also supported by the assertion by Abbott et al. (2008:2), who argue that a prolonged negative psychological and emotional state disrupts the individual's capabilities to function and normally operate in their day-to-day life. Having outlined these significant improvements brought by the Programme in the livelihoods of the participants, in this conclusion, the researcher also took into consideration the assertion by Scoones (2009:196) when referring to livelihood assets which include "both material and social resources and activities required for a means of living. In addition, a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from the stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities while not

undermining the natural resource base”.

In the same context, Mubangizi (2020) is of the view that the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework provides a critical lens through which one examines the “fragility and sustainability of livelihoods”. Mubangizi (2020) identified a set of livelihood capitals that are critical for activities that produce positive livelihood outcomes and the ability to withstand livelihood shocks. The social capital assets obtained by the EPWP workers show that the Programme provided what the researcher calls “social shock-absorbers” (the cushions that protect one against individual social challenges) to these participants during times of need when their otherwise steady livelihoods were interrupted. But in this case, their livelihood was never normal and, therefore, never interrupted. Instead, their daily lives, as one participant explained, were so difficult in the past, and characterised by hopelessness and helplessness. Having to witness the state of their families was heart-breaking every day. But after joining the EPWP, the participants applauded the Programme for changing and improving their social and emotional well-being. As noted by Serrat (2017), achieving a positive state of psychological and emotional well-being forms an important part of achieving livelihood outcomes, particularly reducing emotional vulnerability.

Furthermore, withstanding the livelihood shocks is one of the critical elements in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, as Farrington et al. (1999) argue that for a livelihood to be sustainable, it requires characteristics that ensure that it is able to deal with the stresses and shockwaves brought by the environment, as well as the ability to bounce back from them. At the same time, it should be able to uphold or increase its ability to resist those shocks in future. Some of the livelihood assets attained by the EPWP participants included building houses for themselves and their families. All of those who built their houses indicated that they used to stay in mud houses before and during heavy rain seasons, they always lived in fear that their houses may collapse. On top of that, they had to patch their houses regularly, as the rain washed some materials of their houses away. But since they have built new homes, even during rainy seasons, they are no longer living in fear, and none of the houses that they have built collapsed. This attests to the resilience of these assets created through the EPWP to withstand shocks and improve the lives and livelihoods of the participants. With the income the EPWP workers receive, they were able to build their homes using stronger materials that can withstand such environmental shocks. Moreover, they do not need to regularly patch the houses after heavy rain because their houses are built with cement, bricks and plaster.

The Covid-19 pandemic presented another shock to the global community. Curbing the spread of the virus required different measures to be put in place at the country, community and household level. Poor communities bore the greatest brunt of the pandemic as they could not access some of the resources and measures to curb the spread of the pandemic. One of those measures was self-isolation after one has been affected or exposed to someone who was affected. If the family lives in a one-roomed house, as was the case with many of the EPWP interviewed participants, self-isolation was impossible. But building additional rooms for their families has allowed them to shield themselves from the hardship shocks of the pandemic. They have created a new space in case there was a need for one of the members to self-isolate, as a buffer to cushion them from the shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, the infrastructure built for the communities in the form of bridges has also shown strong resilience against catastrophic floods that affected the province of KZN during April and May 2022. Four of the bridges that were built in the province were in the areas that were affected by floods, but none of these bridges collapsed. This is another demonstration of the resilience of the EPWP-created infrastructure to withstand livelihood shocks.

On the grounds of the aforementioned theoretical understanding around sustainable livelihoods, which clearly indicates the basis of the improvement of the well-being of the community, the ability to withstand the shocks, as well as the provision of the much-needed services and community assets, as exhibited in the findings of the study, it is thus concluded that the EPWP produced its set outputs in the delivery of public services and community assets. In return, the delivered community infrastructure created a multiplier effect for these communities, as certain services that were not provided to communities are now provided. As Serrat (2017) explained, this is a type of value addition of a programme, including assets and resources to which a particular household or an individual has uninterrupted access, which include human capital, natural capital, financial capital, and physical capital.

However, there were areas where the study identified non-compliance with fundamental legislative frameworks of the Programme, which requires attention of the coordinators and implementers, such as compliance with the minimum provisions in legislative frameworks governing the Programme, the enforcement of the recruitment guidelines for EPWP participants, and mainstreaming of the EPWP across all implementers. These are all the areas that should form part of a study focused on a proposed overall EPWP policy. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework provides for Transforming Structures and Processes to help in achieving the livelihood outcomes in the Programme. The EPWP policy should form an integral part of the Programme to address non-compliance with legislation and guidelines, improve the participation of all levels of government, and thereby contribute to the achievement of good livelihood outcomes of the EPWP.

7.5 Study Recommendations

In line with the study findings and analysis from the previous chapters and theoretical considerations, this section describes the recommendations that this study advances to improve the implementation of the EPWP, thereby contributing to further job creation and reducing poverty in rural communities. These recommendations are especially directed at addressing shortcomings and challenges that this study uncovered in relation to the implementation of the EPWP.

7.5.1 Development of an Overarching National EPWP Policy and Enforcement Mechanisms

The study has revealed various gaps and lack of compliance with EPWP guidelines by implementing bodies. These gaps include, among other things, non-compliance with the EPWP wage rate, as 80% of the interviewed participants indicated that they were paid less than the regulated EPWP minimum wage. Despite the fact that their wage rates were below the minimum rate, some participants indicated that their already below-minimum rate had not been increased for the past three years. This is a very concerning finding, particularly for a programme whose sole objective is poverty alleviation and job creation. These actions by EPWP implementing bodies are inconsistent with the provision of Ministerial Determination 4: EPWP 2012 (Government of South Africa, 2012) and the NMW Act, as amended (Government of South Africa, 2018). This legislation set out the wage floor for all EPWP workers. Another area that was raised is interference and lack of transparency in the recruitment of workers, again despite the introduced guidelines. The regulations are undermined and turned into a political game where councillors and those with political connections get preference in EPWP employment opportunities. As one interviewed participant said, “Community leaders often dictate who should be appointed in the project without following the standardised recruitment guidelines, which promote fair and transparent recruitment of project participants”.

This led to the conclusion that the available guidelines and frameworks are not effective and do not yield the anticipated results. The Programme is developed around the Intergovernmental Relations Frameworks Act of 2005, which promotes cooperation among the spheres of government, but there is nothing beyond that. The study revealed that if one department chooses not to comply, there is nothing the Coordinator of the Programme (in this case, the DPWI) can do. Therefore, the researcher recommends that for the Programme to achieve its objectives and enforce compliance with legislative requirements, an overarching national EPWP policy should be introduced. This is consistent with transforming structures and processes included in the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, which assists in addressing the livelihood shocks and thereby realising the positive livelihood outcomes, such as improved well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, etc. What is critical to this policy is built-in enforcement mechanisms because, without such, the new policy would remain the same as the other existing frameworks, with no consequences for the transgressors.

7.5.2 Develop the Capacity to Coordinate and Implement the Programme

The study revealed a lack of adequate human resource capacity in many public bodies for the coordination and implementation of the Programme. The human resource capacity is in both human capital (skills) as well as the numbers (headcount). This stems from the problem in EPWP implementing bodies, especially among top management. One participant indicated that top management does not understand the EPWP, they are not involved in EPWP, and they do not see it as part of the programmes they must implement. Lack of understanding of the EPWP among management affects the implementation of the Programme and achieving its objectives. In this regard, the EPWP is considered by most organisations as an add-on function, and it does not receive the necessary attention it deserves within these organisations. The study findings have shown the EPWP did not enjoy the same level of support and treatment within these organisations as other line function units and programmes, especially in planning, implementation and reporting.

Consequently, it is recommended that EPWP implementing bodies should create capacity within themselves to coordinate and implement the EPWP. This capacity should be improved in both human capital (skills) and headcount (numbers). These recommendations are consistent with the key tenets of the PTE, as one of the key inputs in this model is “adequate human resources” in order for the Programme to achieve the required outcomes or impact. Furthermore, to ensure that top management of the EPWP implementing bodies understand and drive the Programme, it is recommended that capacity building and development interventions in the form of workshops and training be provided to senior management staff. This will assist them in fully appreciating the role of the EPWP and the support required from top management to ensure the full implementation of the EPWP and unlock the most-needed work opportunities for the communities.

7.5.3 Improve Youth Participation

One of the socio-economic problems the nation is facing is the unemployment of young people. According to StatsSA (2021), the youth unemployment rate in the country is sitting at 63.3% using the expanded definition of unemployment and 43.6% using a narrow definition of unemployment. The study findings revealed that in spite of this staggering rate of youth unemployment, the Programme is still unable to reach its “youth targets of 55%”, as per the EPWP (2019:26) guidelines. The participants cited some deterrents for youth to participate in the EPWP. These are the low rate of stipends; stigma associated with the Programme; and the view that the Programme conducts old,

traditional projects done by older people.

In order for the Programme to reach its youth targets and ensure that it contributes to creating youth employment opportunities, the researcher proposes that youth-focused programmes be introduced and those that exist be scaled up. Furthermore, the government can consider rebranding the EPWP in line with the sectors of the economy where they are implemented. This recommendation is not proposing the discarding of the “EPWP Mother Brand”, but in order for new sub-programmes to appeal to this target group, a serious consideration can be made in this regard.

7.5.4 Reconsider and Re-evaluate the EPWP in Light of the Prevailing Challenges of Unemployment

The EPWP has continued to evolve since its conceptualisation in the early 2000s, the current socio-economic conditions (and not the Programme) dictate the direction and the shape it takes. Based on the study analysis and assertion by the Programme participants and government officials interviewed, one would be in denial to think that the Programme is still on the same trajectory as it was in 2004, particularly the nature of programmes implemented and the approach currently being employed in the EPWP.

At the time of the conceptualisation of EPWP, economic growth was between 4% and 5%, and there was an assumption that unemployment would decline as the economy continued to grow and the EPWP would continue to play the role of the employer of last resort in the traditional programmes and sectors. However, as economic growth stagnated over the past two decades, this assumption proved not to be true. The researcher is of the firm view that the Programme has now expanded and entered new terrain in terms of the programmes it implements and the approach it has adopted (whether intentional or unintentional). However, socio-economic forces and conditions have driven the Programme to where it is now. The EPWP is now operating in the mainstream job market (at least in some of its programmes). However, under the old conditions faced, as noted above, it is driven by the forces of socio-economic conditions that the country finds itself. It must be noted though that it has not completely switched to this new terrain as some of its sub-programmes are still implemented in accordance with the conventional approaches, such as the Zibambebe Programme, HCBC Programme, and Land Care Programme, etc. But the emergence of new and unconventional EPWP projects and sub-programmes in the past decade, such as a chef’s programme, artisan programme, and teacher’s assistant programme (which some forms part of the unemployed graduate programmes), is a testimony to the Programme broadening its reach, as dictated by the forces of the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country. The big question, therefore, is since the Programme has entered into the space of non-elementary work, must it still be confined by the conditions of the Ministerial Determination for elementary work, or should a new regime be introduced to cater for the new entrants and category of participants in the EPWP.

It is the researcher’s observation, based on the study analysis, that the Programme is showing dual features. On the one hand, there are its operations in the conventional PEP arena, particularly due to the regulations and the wage rate applicable to the Programme. But on the other hand, the Programme is an operation in the mainstream job market, due to the nature of some of the programmes and work opportunities it creates. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the dualism of the Programme across project and policy lines be closely looked at. It is proposed that a critical assessment of the EPWP be carried out in totality, not only for the five-year interval, but along the lines of this dualism and a new legislative and policy regime be introduced to cater for both the traditional EPWP

participants and those who have emerged (skilled) through the evolution of the Programme.

7.5.5 Alignment and Cooperation across the Three Spheres of Government and Improved Communication

Lack of communication and a silo mentality and approach across all three spheres of government came out very strongly during the group discussions, in that national or provincial departments introduce a programme to the local sphere of government without consultation. Such an approach created challenges between the local sphere of government and communities, especially when it came to the rate of pay, since provincial and national departments are paying higher wages compared to the local sphere of government on the projects they implement in their wards. The silo mentality and approach are inconsistent with the ethos and provisions of the legislation, particularly Chapter 3 of the Constitution and the Intergovernmental Relations Frameworks Act of 2005, which promotes cooperation among the spheres of government. Section 41(1)(h) of the Constitution promotes that “all spheres of government and organs of states must co-operate with one another in mutual trust and in good faith by: (i) assisting and supporting one another, [and] (ii) informing one another of, and consulting one another on matters of common interest” (Government of South Africa, 1996:25-26). The study recommends the strengthening of the existing institutional arrangements in the Programme, particularly within the local sphere of government, and further proposes that the newly introduced District Development Model (DDM) through COGTA foster cooperation, collaboration and communication across all three spheres of government.

7.5.6 Remodelling and Introduction of New Programmes in the EPWP

The majority of the participants were concerned that since the EPWP was conceived in the early 2000s, there have been no major programmatic changes and shifts introduced, especially taking into account the changing environment and circumstances in the South African job market. It is proposed that the Programme be further expanded and introduce new initiatives with more focus on programmes of a longer duration, as studies have shown that participants who have more years of experience in the EPWP have higher chances of being employed after exiting the Programme compared to those with shorter experience. One example is the tried and tested Zibambele Rural Roads Maintenance Programme, which can increase in scale as well as the duration of employment opportunities. As suggested above, this programme could be remodelled and adapted to other areas of maintenance, such as maintenance of community facilities such as schools, clinics, halls and other infrastructure.

The study analysis has shown that the EPWP is struggling to reach its targets for youths and persons with a disability. The researcher proposes that the EPWP introduces the “remodelled Zibambele Programme” using a targeted approach to these two demographic groups where it is struggling to meet the target. This remodelled programme can look beyond road maintenance and include the maintenance of schools, clinics, community halls and other local facilities. A targeted approach in this case speaks of youths and persons with disabilities. The EPWP should first recruit young persons and persons with disabilities, conduct training on the most common maintenance tasks that they would find in these facilities, and then place these participants at various facilities to provide maintenance services. Partnerships should be sought with the private sector for these new programmes as well as to open up opportunities for participants when they exit the EPWP.

7.5.7 Support for Small Businesses and Cooperatives

The small business sector has been credited for its great contribution to job creation and economic development across the world. South Africa relies on this sector of the economy for job creation. The study participants also cited their desire to start their own businesses, but they did not know where to start and about the support that is available. Some indicated that they are saving part of their money in a stokvel and need further assistance to start their cooperative. It is recommended that the EPWP extend and upscale its small business support initiative. But to grow and sustain this initiative, Mutambara (2018:23) proposed that government should provide an “end-to-end small business support solution”, rather than a piecemeal approach.

It is further recommended that entrepreneurship should be considered as a module in the training initiative that the EPWP is offering to its participants to assist them in creating their own employment opportunities.

7.5.8 Programme Oversight and Monitoring at Project Level

Compliance with regulations and procedures is another critical process in the implementation of the Programme. This refers to policy guidelines and procedures regulating the coordination and implementation of the Programme. During the discussions, the majority of participants generally acknowledged the existence of EPWP regulations and guidelines. However, the study analysis revealed a lack of oversight and monitoring of the implementation of the regulations, and this was not on the regulations alone. The general day-to-day activities at project levels were not monitored. Lack of supervision of the EPWP was among the most prevalent challenges, as some of these workers attested that they are sometimes taken and left at a site alone with no explanation of the task they need to perform, and sometimes without adequate tools. The driver comes in the afternoon to pick them up and drop them off in town. Nobody checks on the task for the day and advises on those for the following day.

A recommendation is thus made that a structured oversight and monitoring mechanism at both programme and project level be introduced. The EPWP should not be used as a money transferring scheme, which Phillips (2004:18) criticised as a “make-work” programme that involves unproductive activities. With proper supervision at a project level and adequate monitoring at programme level, the EPWP should be able to achieve its key objective of the provision of good-quality public goods and services needed by the community in an effective manner. The Programme would be able to reverse the negative stigma discussed in the previous section where the EPWP participants are referred to by community members as *ocambalala*, a Xhosa and Zulu word loosely translated as “the ones who sleep”, which refers to the behaviour of some of the EPWP workers who are often found loitering around or sleeping under the trees. The researcher further recommends that with the current high rate of youth unemployment, including graduates, the Programme should consider recruiting these graduates in line with the recommendation in section 7.5.3 above to improve the supervision of the EPWP workers. This could create those additional (and most needed) jobs for the youth and ensure that the projects are properly implemented.

7.5.9 Dedicated Payment System for EPWP Participants

Delay in the payment of the EPWP wages to participants was raised by many research participants as one of the challenges they experience in the Programme, as some indicated it sometimes took two to

three weeks for them to receive their payment after the month has ended. With cases of this nature, the predictability of income is compromised, which is very important in financial planning. As a result, these workers are therefore unable to plan properly, because they do not know for sure when they will receive their wages. This is against the objectives of the Programme.

The payment of the EPWP workers can be automated to reduce these delays. The researcher proposes that the EPWP investigate the possibility of a biometric linked and dedicated payment system (which could also be administered via smartphone applications at project site level), that will be simpler and could be used by all implementing bodies. This dedicated payment system linked to workers' biometric data would supplement the EPWP Reporting System (EPWP-RS), the system where the EPWP data is reported, including data on work opportunities created, organisations implementing the EPWP, number of projects etc. This system could create checks and balances in the Programme, where a person signs the attendance register biometrically, which is then linked to their profile. At the end of the month, the system consolidates and automatically generates the payment based on the number of days worked. This could have multiple advantages to the Programme, such as reducing paperwork and providing real-time data whenever needed for reporting and audit purposes. Project owners and project managers could use the system at the end of the month to get reports on how many people signed in, which projects are affected, and many other factors they may want to assess and verify on the system before payments are processed.

7.6 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge in Public Administration

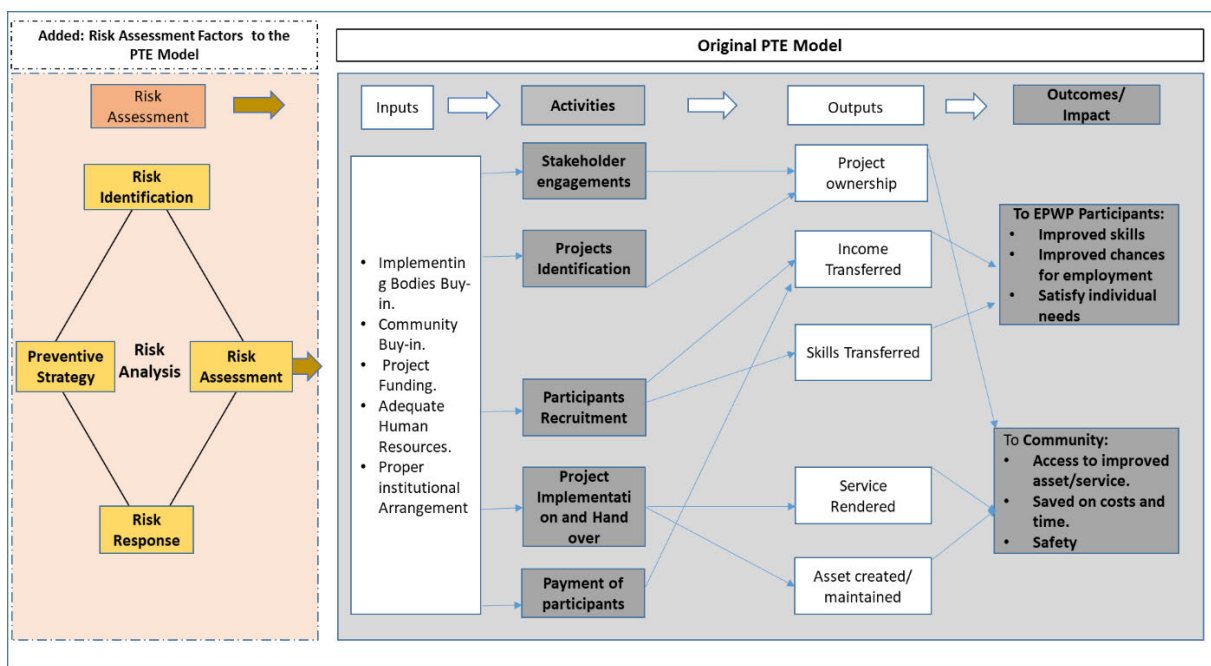
This study was centred on two theories, the PTE and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. There are other theories that are relevant and that other researchers could use in evaluating programmes of this nature, such as TOC, which as Rogers (2014:21) opines, would outline how programme actions provide strings of outcomes, which in turn, contribute to the attainment of the ultimate envisioned impact of a programme.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Rogers et al. (2000) and Wilder (2009) indicated that in developing a sound PTE, evaluators ought to use a series of categories: input, activities, outputs and outcomes, and impact of the programme. These are shown in boxes in Figure 8 above, with arrows linking them. This model assists one in measuring whether or not the programme was able to achieve the intended outcomes or impact. The analysis of the EPWP and the study findings reveal the challenges experienced during the implementation of the Programme, especially from the information shared by government officials (as research participants). The PTE fails to acknowledge that programmes and projects do not always follow a linear route, however. As such, there is a missed but critical planning step for analysing and identifying the risks associated with these programmes or projects.

In view of this theoretical framework applied in the study, the researcher submits for possible consideration and inclusion during the planning and design stages for the EPWP “A Risk-Inclined Program Theory Evaluation Model”. A built-in risk factor should include risk identification and risk mitigation incorporated in the framework, as shown in the figure below, and these must be addressed during the input and activity phases of programmes or projects because if these are not included, there may be dire consequences for the programme outputs and outcomes.

Figure 12 below depicts the Risk-Inclined PTE Model, which is modified from Wilder Research (2009). This reconfigured model includes an additional step to be considered in the development of an EPWP project: risk assessment. As indicated above, the original model only focused on the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, or impact of a programme, and it failed to acknowledge that

programmes and projects do not always follow a linear route. Thus, a built-in risk assessment module is added to this framework. It includes the four elements of risk management, which are risk identification, assessment, response, and preventative strategies. This embedded risk assessment module completes the model.



Source: Adapted from Wilder Research (2009)

Figure 12: A Risk-Inclined PTE Model

7.7 Recommendations for Future Research Areas

PEPs have been widely researched, as this study has revealed. In trying to close the gap in the areas that have not been adequately covered by many studies conducted within this field, this study focused on critically assessing and evaluating the role of PEPs in contributing to service delivery and improving livelihoods in rural communities. The author referred to this as the outward looking and external effect paradigms of the EPWP to communities and their livelihoods. The broader impact evaluation is conducted but not by adopting a narrow view in the programme assessment and looking only at job creation and income transfer, as many studies in the PEP area sought to achieve.

There is broader scope for further research in the area of PEPs in South Africa, which was not interrogated thoroughly by this study, as it was focused on a particular segment of PEPs. This includes assessing the qualitative economic gains of the assets created through the EPWP for communities. This study scratched the surface in this area. A detailed review could add value to the Programme and to government, if there is evidence of positive economic outcomes and how the EPWP could be massified.

An investigation could be done in the form of an impact assessment of the EPWP wage rate vs the national minimum wage, as prescribed in the NMW Act of 2018, i.e. whether the two need to be aligned or the existing gap should continue to be maintained, especially from the point of view of both the implementing bodies and the workers.

Another area worth looking at is whether the EPWP should continue in its current form as a short-to-medium-term strategy for job creation and poverty alleviation, or if it is time for the Programme to become a medium-to-long-term intervention to overcome poverty and unemployment, as this study has revealed that some workers have been in the Programme for more than 15 years. Surely, this is not a short-term intervention. Therefore, we can ask what must change in the Programme structure and implementation approach, including policies. There is fertile ground for future investigation on this subject.

7.8 Conclusion

To recapitulate, the objective of this study was to critically assess and evaluate the role PEPs and their contribution to service delivery and rural livelihoods in South Africa. With this objective in mind, this study sought to understand the impact of the assets created through programmes for service delivery and the livelihoods of communities first. Secondly, the study sought to establish the contribution of the EPWP to individual participants' lives and livelihoods and lastly, to assess the Programme's implementation challenges and how they can be addressed.

Applying the qualitative research method using Programme Theory Evaluation (PTE) as well as the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as the theoretical frameworks for this study, the findings suggest, firstly, that the EPWP positively contributed to improving the livelihoods of the workers of the Programme as the primary beneficiaries, through income transfer in the form of wages received from the Programme and the improvement of their skills, which they, in turn, used in their communities to find local jobs and supplement the income received from the Programme. Furthermore, the study revealed that the workers were able to improve their food security and acquire key assets for themselves and their families, such as building houses, buying beneficial home appliances, etc., through the EPWP wages. The Programme was also found to have improved the social network of participants and some established social and savings clubs, which helped them in times of need. These are all important sustainable livelihood assets that the EPWP was able to encourage through its initiatives.

Secondly, the study revealed a positive impact of the assets (in the form of bridges and roads) created and maintained through the EPWP for the community. For example, school children and adults no longer had to wade to cross the river. Children were no longer missing school and exams if there were heavy rain because of inaccessibility of the school and no drowning cases were reported since these bridges were constructed. The construction of these bridges and maintenance of the roads brought services closer to the community. Despite the rise of Covid-19, ambulances were still easily reaching communities. The response time by police improved, which is especially important with the increasing incidents of gender-based violence in the country. An additional service that was provided and that could not be accessed more easily includes scholar transport. These all pointed to the improvement of service delivery emanating from the EPWP in these communities.

Alongside the positive sentiments and impact the programme had on these communities, the study also revealed the challenges that exist, particularly on the implementation and coordination side of the programme, as cited by the government officials across the three spheres of government. These challenges include a lack of capacity from public bodies to implement the EPWP; the interference and disregard of the existing procedures in the recruitment of EPWP workers, citing ward councillors as the main culprits; and the lack of an overarching EPWP national policy to bring coordinate the Programme and impose corrective measures on those public bodies that are non-compliant. Furthermore, the EPWP was unable to attract more young people due to the programme design,

despite the high rate of youth unemployment in the country. In conclusion, to address these challenges experienced in the coordination and implementation of the EPWP, the study made proposals and recommendations. Key among the proposed interventions are:

- 1) The development of an overarching national EPWP policy and enforcement mechanisms.
- 2) Developing the capacity to coordinate and implement the Programme and improve youth participation.
- 3) Reconsidering and re-evaluating whether the EPWP is still the same vehicle introduced in 2003.
- 4) Remodelling and introducing new programmes in the EPWP.
- 5) Support for small businesses and cooperatives as they have the potential to create additional jobs after EPWP projects end.
- 6) Consider introducing a dedicated payment system for EPWP participants.
- 7) Adopt the Risk-Inclined Program Theory Evaluation Model in conceptualising and implementing EPWP projects with the four elements of risk management (risk identification, assessment, response and preventative strategies, as compared to the original model) (Wilder Research, 2009).

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Appendix 1: EPWP Spatial Distribution: Project Concentration and Work Opportunities

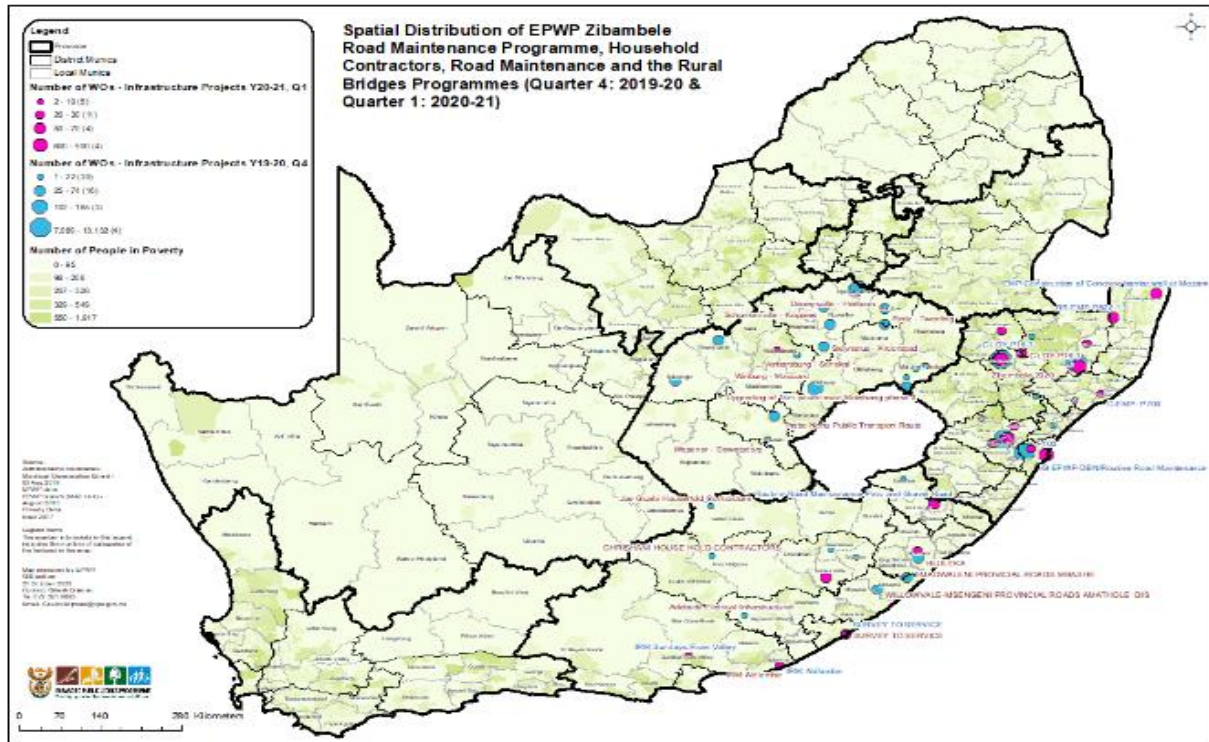


Figure 13: EPWP Zibambele Programme spatial distribution across South Africa

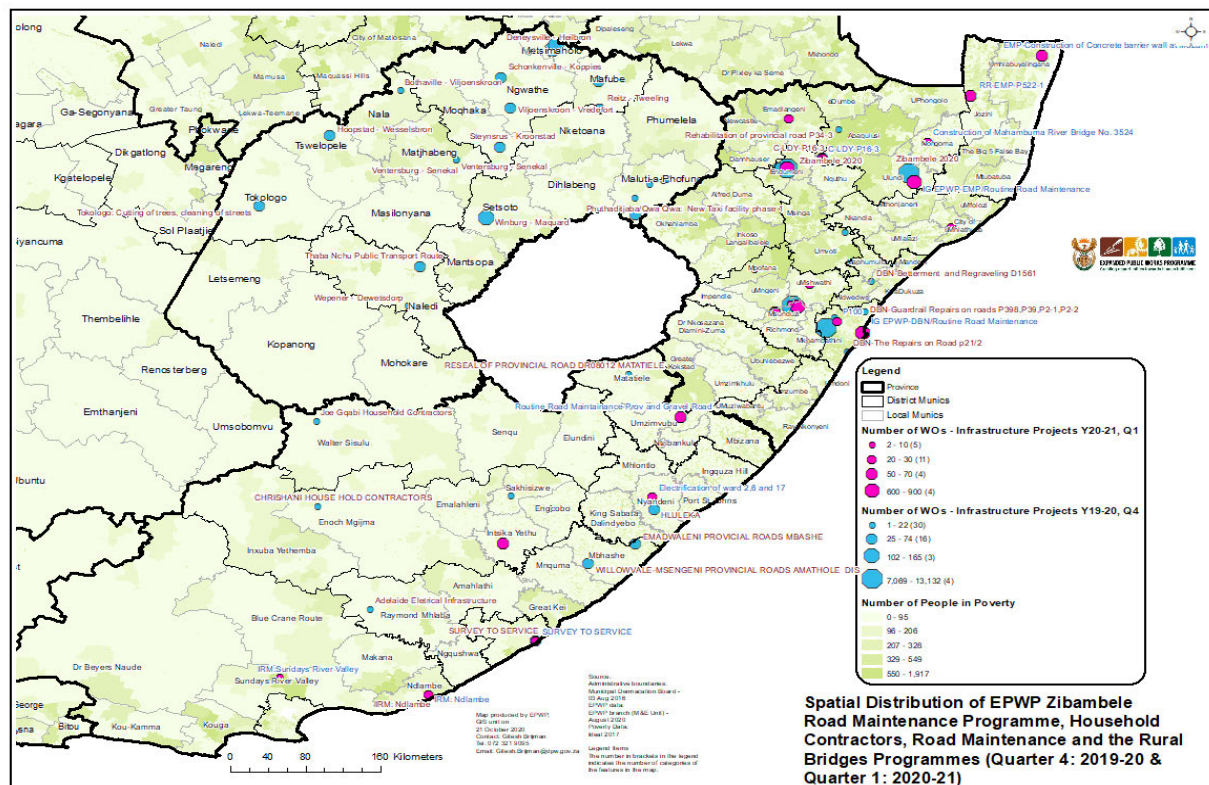


Figure 14: EPWP Zibambele Programme spatial distribution, KZN

Appendix 2: Study Semi-Structured and Open-Ended Questions

Appendix 3: Ethical Clearance Certificate

Appendix 4: DPWI Gate Keepers Letter

Appendix 5: Researcher's Introductory Letter

Appendix 6: Turnitin Report Page 1

Appendix 7: Turnitin Full Report

Appendix 8: Letter from the editor confirming editing the thesis

Appendix 9: Supervisor's permission to submit