

The Community Work Programme in South Africa



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The Second Economy Strategy Project:
An initiative of the SA Presidency

Background to the Community Work Programme

- The SA Presidency initiated a strategy process to address the ‘second economy;’ a Framework was approved by Cabinet in January 2009:
 - It focuses on the need to address inequality and economic marginalisation
 - It argues that employment should be placed at the heart of all economic policy.
 - And it presents a set of ‘headline strategies’ to do so.
- The Framework also highlights that strategies to change the structure of the economy and patterns of distribution will take time – and will reach the most marginalised last.
- SA therefore needs to fast-track complementary strategies that target the most marginalised first.
- The most important of these is a massive public works/public employment strategy: EPWP-plus.
- Within this, the Community Work Programme is proposed as the ‘anchor strategy’ for approaches intended to target the most marginalised first.
- The CWP is part of EPWP, and complements the other components.

What is the Community Work Programme?

1. The Community Work Programme provides access to a minimum level of regular work - ie 2 days a week = 100 days a year.
2. It is an area-based programme, intended to be ongoing; this allows it to target the poorest areas: where market-based jobs are unlikely to come any time soon.
3. Site management is handled by implementing agencies appointed by the programme.
5. The CWP uses community participation to identify 'useful work' and priorities.
6. 'Work' is decided in Ward Committees or local development fora; it is multi-sectoral and contributes to public/community goods and services;
7. Start-up scale: 1,000 participants per site
8. CWP sites have a 65% labour intensity.

Rationale for key design elements:

1. Why the emphasis on 'regular and predictable' work?

- Unemployment is deeply structural
- There is a need for an employment safety-net that is ongoing:
 - 'Exits' from EPWP into sustainable jobs seldom exist;
 - Market-based jobs are not keeping up;
 - The SME survival rate is low – so are returns to 'survivors';
- Research shows that households receiving a grant are more likely to invest in economic activity: predictable income mitigates risk, allows for financial planning;
- Unemployed people are rarely 'idle': but their activities are unable to lift them out of poverty;
- The CWP aims to supplement existing livelihood strategies, without disrupting or displacing them.
- The injection of regular and predictable income into a community 'thickens' local markets in a more sustainable way.

Rationale for key design elements

2. Use of Implementing Agents in response to capacity weaknesses

- In SA, local government was introduced in the post-apartheid period.
- Much progress, but in marginal areas: severe capacity constraints persist:
- Lack of service delivery in marginal areas has led to service delivery protests;
- The design of CWP aims to avoid placing further burdens on local government BUT nevertheless to deliver more jobs locally.
- To operate, a CWP site requires formal support from local government; the use of ward committees strengthens local institutions, avoids parallel systems;
- But implementation is managed by Implementing Agencies - appointed centrally:
- The IA's are responsible for project management, logistics, technical support, financial management, setting up cashless payment of wages;
- They account centrally for effective programme management:
- They account locally for the delivery of 'useful work' prioritised locally, and for the quality of assets and services delivered.
- Devolution of programme management to the local level a process.

Rationale for key design elements

3. Strengthening participation in local development planning

- In SA, ward committees are the community-level structures to which elected ward councilors account
- Integrated Development Plans are drafted at this level and aggregated at the level of Local Government.
- This is intended to enable strong grassroots input into local development planning: but the process is still new and often weak;
- In practice, evidence that the CWP is strengthening this process:
 - The IDP is an annual cycle – making it hard to sustain involvement. In the CWP, the cycle from identification of work to implementation is often just a fortnight. This is energising these structures.
 - The CWP is able to address some of the ‘unfunded mandates’ at a local level, and to unblock partially funded initiatives.
- Use of this mechanism has certainly strengthened the CWP:
 - It institutionalises the link to local government;
 - Ensures alignment with IDP – and additionality;
 - Facilitates the link to other spheres of government.

What 'work' have communities prioritised?

- In practice, a common menu of typical priorities has emerged and these have become the 'anchor' programmes:
 - A strong focus on food security:
 - Home-based care, mainly for HIV and TB affected households and auxiliary care: cooking, cleaning;
 - Care of orphans and vulnerable children, child-headed households;
 - Social programmes to tackle alcohol abuse, violence, crime,
 - Development of recreation spaces, sporting facilities targeting youth
 - Environmental rehabilitation and maintenance Informal settlement upgrading.
 - Zibambele-type road maintenance
- In most cases, these are issues government is already trying to address, and a link to existing departments/spheres of government and/or EPWP programmes is required.
- This has implications for how the CWP is institutionalised in the state.

Strong focus on translating social challenges into work opportunities

- 'Violence against women' identified as a priority: but how to translate this into 'useful work'?
- Many dimensions of care create work opportunities:
 - OVC's, Child-headed households
 - Home based care: HIV/Aids and TB affected households
 - Auxiliary care: cooking, cleaning and caring;
- With what impacts on volunteership?
 - Volunteer organisations are drowning under the scale of need;
 - Poor communities are reaching the limits of their resources to 'care';
 - Paying for care work gives social (and economic) validation to crucial but unrecognised, unpaid, support roles – mainly provided by women;
 - It expands the workforce available to deliver 'care' of many kinds;
 - Institutionalises and builds the sustainability of social solidarity.

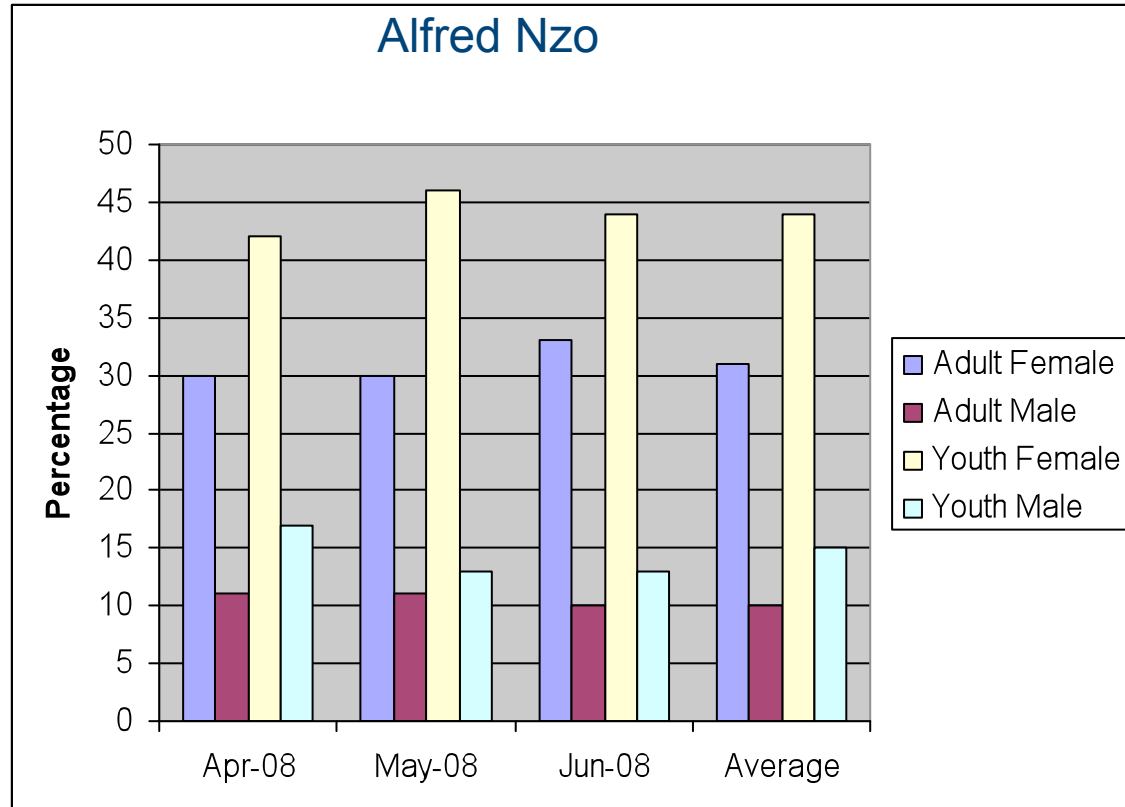
Food security also a priority in many guises

- Infrastructure to support food security:
 - fencing to protect food crops from grazing animals;
 - Water harvesting technology
 - Conversion of unused public land into allotments, food gardens
- Environmental action
 - Rehabilitation of eroded land, dongas
 - Removal of alien species to increase water run-off
 - Spring protection
- Labour support to maintain food security levels
 - To vulnerable households, child-headed households, school food gardens
- Feeding schemes, cooking meals for child-headed households.
 - It's 65% labour intensive and the outcome is certainly a public good.

Innovation in community development : The Organisation Workshop

- One of the methodologies used by the CWP is called the 'Organisation Workshop' – De Morais, Brazil
- It involves large numbers of people for a month in a full-time action-learning process: to learn work organisation and task management skills: to deliver a set of outputs agreed with the community.
- In April, 400 people from 6 communities participated in an OW as part of the 'Kwanda' programme: they become the local 'animators,' team leaders and supervisors in a new CWP site.
- A challenge made to communities (captured on a reality TV show):
 - To make participating communities 'look better, feel better and work better;'
- Its focus areas:
 - Care of vulnerable children
 - Reduction of alcohol abuse and associated violence
 - Community approaches to prevention of HIV infection
 - Strengthening livelihoods.

Demographics of Participation



70% + female participation

High participation by young women at all sites

In sum: scope for social impacts across several dimensions

- The impacts of access to work on the participants: self respect, access to income, agency;
 - Impacts on income on poverty; potential impacts of this child nutrition, prevention of HIV/Aids, reductions in crime, etc;
 - Economic participation of women;
- The impact of having ‘many hands’ to tackle the sheer scale of work involved in addressing social problems
 - Labour to maintain food security for vulnerable households
 - The scale of home based care and auxiliary services required;
- The impact of the public assets and public services on productivity and the quality of life for all in communities;
 - Impact of water harvesting infrastructure on health, nutrition, food production;
 - Impact of community facilities, organised activity on youth;
- The impacts of strengthened institutions of public participation.

Strategies to scale up

- Shifting from 1 day a week to 2 days a week
- Recognition that easiest to scale up by expanding scope of sites to cover a whole municipality: leverages off existing relationships with local government;
- So: from an initial target of 1,000 participants per site – each site now expected to double annually to about 4,000 per municipality over 3 years.
- If we cover 228 municipalities x 4,000 = about 1m participants per annum.
- The new target set for CWP: to scale up from 3 sites to 50 sites and 50,000 participants by December: exponential growth.
- **And we can do it! Watch this space!**
- If so: clear potential to establish a presence in the most marginal municipalities over 3 years – and in all of them soon thereafter.
- This institutional capacity then becomes permanent: and can expand or contract in response to economic conditions (and budgets).
- It puts in place the institutional architecture required to deliver a minimum employment guarantee in SA.

Some implications of design choices

- In this model, the relationship of the wage level to market-based wages is less of an issue:
 - People are unlikely to leave full-time employment - even at a lower wage - for 2 days a week
 - And still likely to accept other casual work to supplement incomes.
- In practise, CWP an institutional mechanism facilitating integrated development at the local level. This always raises Treasury concerns of 'duplication.' Mitigated by design:
 - Communities unlikely to prioritise things already being provided, so rather than duplication – CWP addresses gaps in delivery
 - Link to local government ensures alignment
 - 65% labour intensity means CWP has to form partnerships with line departments for larger 'works'.
 - This is necessary to avoid setting up parallel funding mechanisms: which cause hostility from affected line departments. Who needs hostility?
 - Requires a crucial set of intergovernmental MOU's, partnerships.

Some lessons about innovation

1. Innovation can be hard to do:
 - It's new!
 - There's resistance to risk.
- CWP – from concept note to a national priority in the President's Address in 18 months;
- Still a long way to go: but demonstration projects CAN provide a stepping stone into national policy.
- There's no way the CWP would have been adopted as national policy from a concept document.
- Of course it helped that it was initiated from within a strategy process initiated by the Presidency; EPWP support helped too;
- But too many 'pilots' have no trajectory into policy!
- If you go the 'pilot' route: think about oversight: how you involve national stakeholders in such a way that you limit their initial risk, but enable them to take ownership and manage the transition into policy when the pilots demonstrate impact.
- Otherwise: just another 'project' with no systemic impact.

Back to the big picture: The CWP can contribute to wider strategic goals

- The CWP has a single main objective: create regular work for those who need it.
- But in achieving this, a range of other outcomes are achieved: which contribute to the following key strategic concerns of the South African government:
 - Strengthening community participation in local development planning and community development
 - Creating an institutional mechanism that facilitates integrated development at the local level;
 - Strengthening the economic ‘agency’ of poor people in marginal areas: and countering the impacts of structural ‘dependency’.
- These are critical parts of wider policy concerns of government;
- They are part of an agenda of building a developmental state.