

# FOSTERING ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME: THE CHALLENGES THAT REMAINS IN NTSELAMANZI

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**Abstract:** Community Work Programme (CWP) is an area-based programme targeted at the rural areas for improving the living standard rural dweller by engaging their capabilities. It is intended to reduce poverty and the inequality gap in South Africa by creating employment, empowerment and training and development. The study therefore investigates the role of the CWP as a catalyst for inclusive development of the rural dwellers in the Ntselemanzi community. The empowerment theory is used to x-ray the discussion. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used to generate conduit for the argument in this paper. It was discovered that the challenges faced by the community is more of intergenerational than new. It demonstrates and gives a sense that the monies derived from the programme is not enough to enable a family escape poverty, hence, most of those conscripted into the programme are women with dependents and the among is little to take a family out of poverty. The study recommends among others that a concerted effort be made to strengthen the levels of the empowerment in the community. It is therefore imperative that government pays workers in this programme a living wage that could help them escape poverty. Again, we argued as globally acclaimed that industrialization breeds growth; the level of industrialization in the Alice area is deplorable and therefore sustainable livelihood is likely not visible within the current demographic perspective in the Ntselemanzi community.

## INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

Community Work Programme (CWP) is a project created by the South African government through Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). According to the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) (2003), the idea of the Expanded Public Works Programme is to overcome the rate and magnitude of unemployment and poverty among those in the second economy. The EPWP Policy Document was formally announced by President Thabo Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) in February 2003 and adopted by the cabinet in November 2003 (EPWP Policy Document, 2009:01). The programme was conscripted into a five year plan with an

anticipation to generate job opportunities and provide training for a almost 5,000,000 people on or before 2009, especially those in rural areas (Mathapo, 2011).

According to Philip (2010), the CWP is an area-based programme that is targeted at the poorest areas with an intention of continuity after the 5<sup>th</sup> year with minor modifications. Specification of the work and training carried out was decided in Ward Committees or local development, as a result of their base at the residual or hub of the people. Hence, to Philip, the main object of the CWP was to create regular work for those who need it and establishing community participation in local development planning and community development

(Philip 2010). Thereby, establishing an institutional tool that enable and ensures integrated development at the local level, strengthen the local economic agency of poor people in marginalized areas and countering the impacts of basic dependence. The essence of the CWP also includes, to reduce unemployment and redirecting the unemployed into productive sector of the economy through training programmes that increases their income. Hence, producing a fully engaging employees in communities (Lewin, 2010: 4).

Among others the CWP programme was initially implemented through the department of public works as its coordinating artillery. The major aim for the creation or establishment of the CWP was to as a poverty alleviating strategy as well as an empowerment tool through which job opportunities are created for both the short and term purposes of employees in localities. The main target audience of this programme were blacks; unemployed and the marginalised that are willing to work, the unskilled, those excluded by social grant system, the urban and rural poor, people living with disabilities and more especially the youth.

The essence of the CWP is to acceleration economic development, empowerment, change, and freedom of ipoor and marginalized at the local sphere of influence. Since, development and institution building is a question of improving individuals productive capabilities and capacity. To Peet and Hartwick (2009), development seen through the prism of making better life for everyone and a better life for most people (the poor) means meeting basic needs.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE ALICE ECONOMY**

According to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (1994) the most enterprising sectors of the Alice economy is the service sector and to a larger extent agriculture. Formal employment to be the basic means of recruitment in this area, accounting for 70% for all formal employment and 63% of its output. The nature of the service provided within this area are largely public in nature as the Victoria Hospital, University of Fort Hare, the municipality, and several high, primary and nursery schools (Nkokobe IDP, 2012). Agriculture stands at 11.9% and 26% in terms of

output. Other means of livelihood in the area would include pension income and social grants.

### **EMPLOYMENT IN THE EASTERN CAPE**

In this study, we conceptualise the unemployed with the broad yardstick of anyone above the age of 15, who though might not be actively seeking for a job but will accept to work if given the opportunity (Knight, 2006). In South Africa, the Eastern Cape unlike most provinces has had several presidents and scholars from its region. Yet, it constitutes the less attractive and the most poverty-ridden province in the country (StatsSA, 2017). The Eastern Cape has the highest number of the unemployment rate of 48.5%, compared to the national average of 34% (StatsSA 2016). This is because opportunities are sparse and the people are not eager for development or to work. In Alice in particular, the unemployment rate stands at 80% of the total population (Asah, 2011: 170). This is owing to the fact that there is non-existence of industries that can accommodate the teeming population. Hence, there are very few job opportunities in the area, which are mainly unskilled. With a high demand for jobs and for a better standard of living, the desperation for the population to seek jobs have resulted in some graduates becoming sales girls in Spa, Shoprite, Cashbuild and the likes to support their families. According to Asah (2011), high unemployment rate cushioned with the economically active population made up of students, youth and women with no access to job opportunities accounts for increasing criminality in the Alice area. Hence, there is a need to rethink the local economic development strategies as contained in the integrated development plan of the municipality in the area.

Likewise, the bulk of household are dependent on government grants to support their families. The grannies 'Gogo's' live in continuous disdain to wellbeing. A study conducted in 2009 on individual and household income concluded that salary, pensions, remittances less informal income and enterprise profits accounts for 58 % in the area. Several households earn below R500 per month and a 77% below R1000 per month, compared to 41% of households in Eastern Cape that earn below R500 per month and 30% for the country as a whole (Tevera et al,

2011). The statistics demonstrate the lag both in the delivery of service in an area that is not economically vibrant, therefore, it will be argued that there is a relationship between economically deprived location to poverty. In that where there are lesser opportunities in a community or locality there is also lowered opportunities for employment/ recruitment in that population. The population therefore of the Alice area is mainly rural and the majority of this population are women - females (53%) than males (47%) (Census, 2011).

<i>Alice district</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Urban</b>	3180	21
<b>Rural</b>	11967	79
<b>Total</b>	15147	100

*Source:* Census (2011)

### **OBJECTIVE**

To investigate the roles of the CWP as a catalyst for job creation and poverty alleviation in the Alice area of the Eastern Cape.

The dimensions and the challenges of employees of the community work programme in the Alice area of Eastern Cape.

### **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Data were gathered using the interview instrument with respondents employed by CWP within Ntselemanzi community, members of the community and the management of CWP. At the time of this study, the CWP in Ntselemanzi had a total of 25 workers. A total of 14 participants were interviewed, a breakdown shows that 8 respondents were manual labourers, 5 were community members and the other one was from the management. The reason why the entire small group was not interviewed as a result of indisposition as at the time the interview were conducted.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Empowerment theory**

According to Parkins and Zimmerman (1995: 569), empowerment links individual well-being with the larger

social and political environment by connecting to a struggle in creating a responsive community. It compels individuals to think in terms of wellness to illness, competence to deficit, and strengths to weaknesses. This idea is the ability of an individual can only be harnessed when the individual is positive oriented. Furthermore, Parkins and Zimmerman (1995: 570) states that theories of empowerment include both processes and outcomes, proposing that actions and activities should be empowering and that the outcome of such processes result in being empowered.

Ledwith (2005) described empowerment as not only a way to address inequalities and provision of resources to people to move out of poverty but also giving the essential tools to shape the entire individual and empower a basic state of mind and cognizance. Thus action should be taken through pushing for transformation at individual, group, community and policy level. Implying that empowerment can only be achieved through cooperation and by framing a common set of condition for advancement that propels transformation.

Empowerment theory on the hand, at community level involves the inclusion of members of the community in decision making and planning. In this way the community members take with them the responsibility and ownership of the transformation process (Goodman *et al.*, 1998). By allowing citizen participation, the community development organizers will be instilling a sense of pride and ownership that might traditionally would have been ignored or taken for granted. Empowerment is becoming in South Africa famous for community building process, which provides communities with tools to assist themselves instead of relying on community leaders or government for solutions (Sanoff, 2000).

Empowerment theory generally refers the ability of people to be influential and taking full control over their personal, social-economic and political circumstances through actions that improves their living standard of life (Israel *et al.*, 1994). It reflects a process where individuals and communities are gaining power and are increasing their influence in transforming their lives (Solomon, 1976; Fawcett *et al.*, 1994). Rappaport (1992) described empowerment as a concept that links peoples strengths,

competencies and actions to social change. One of his observations was that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence but difficult to define it in all its ramifications, hence, it means different things to different people, including its nature of being contextually bounded, as well as, its shapes and forms in terms of its utilising in both academic discourse and practical life.

Czuba (1999) provides three natural characteristics of empowerment as multi-dimensional, social, and a process. Its multi-dimensional characteristic arises as a result of it occurring at different levels, for example, in community/ies, group/s and individual levels. It also influences thinking in sociology, social and public policy, psychology, economics among others. As a social process empowerment occurs in interrelations and it is a continuous process. Other features of empowerment may differ according to different specific contexts vis-à-vis the societies or communities involved, but the aforementioned three characteristics remain constant (Page, 1999).

Empowerment as stated earlier is not carried out in isolation, but rather in a confined territory. In this case, the papers look at employment from the viewpoint of a community, and within the community the empowerment programme referred to Community Works Programme between 2011-2015.

### **Community Empowerment**

At the core of community empowerment is the design of policies, plans, targets and measures that enhance people's autonomy or socio-economic liberties. Community empowerment is a tool that trains individuals within a community to do for themselves what they would have been unable to do (Muthee, 2010). Hence, the need to assess the CWP and its effect on poverty alleviation, unemployment cum inclusive development.

Keams (2004) identified different characteristics of community empowerment as where people develop confidence, form organisations, and co-operative, and build competences. The characteristics of an empowered community as identified by Keams (2004:13), includes, confident, inclusive, influential, cooperatives, and organise themselves. However, palatable this notion might sound, there are a few pitfalls of this theory.

### **Pitfalls of empowerment theory**

Empowerment relies heavily on the principles of participation – for instance, in areas where women are often unwilling to voice publicly and freely due to the contextual cultures and religious norms hampers the notion of inclusiveness, and where women and men are unable to mingle creates another problem towards forming a cooperative (see Islamic nations for instance) (Fung, 2001).

The idea that empowerment theory alone can guarantee community development seems wholistic, because there are several factors that can inhibit community development than empowerment, for instance, political instability, cadre deployment, nepotism, selfishness and greed among others.

The most vital aspect of empowerment according to Douglas (1994), is that, it develops competencies of the community in dealing with its own peculiar problems. Real participation results in empowerment and forms an essential constituent of building community competency. This is based on the notion that expertise in this regards are available and willing, it will also be based on the assumption that the communities have a common goal, which is in unionism with the goals of the politician. For in South Africa and Africa in general, one of the most common problems witnessed is the disparities of purposes and goals, not excluding corruption, greed, selfishness and nepotism.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Community Work Programmes**

The CWP is another addition to the government's employment creation strategy in South Africa. The CWPSs was established in 2009 with the sole objective of alleviating poverty through direct employment creation. It uses a locally based system approach, planned as a community employment programme for the community members on standard and predictable income stream (Meth, 2009). The general oversight of the system is carried out by a steering committee of the Presidency, Department of Social Development (SDS), Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Department of Public Works (DPW) and

National Treasury (Mayer et al, 2011). Though it is home to CoGTA.

The Community Works Program (CWP) is designed to create direct employment focused on reducing the alarming levels of unemployment as well as inequalities characterising the South African economy (Mayer *et al*, 2011). The CWP intends to create community employment which helps in enhancing community livelihoods (Philips *et al*, 2015).

The CWP supplement other employment strategies instead of replacing them. The CWP utilizes community development principles to recognize valuable work at local level with the local people actively participating in the whole process (Dichabe, 2015). There are two potential advantages that emanate from CWPs. Firstly; expanded spending by the new workers provides business to local retailers over and above the resultant multiplier effect to other local sectors of the economy. This then leads to general community development as people have a dependable income stream in the process reducing their vulnerability (Dichabe, 2015).

### **Community development**

Community development is a two worded concept which requires the two words to be first described separately. A community can be describe as a group of people within the same locality with shared concerns and identity. Development on the other hand and in general is a process that enhances the people's choices. It brings new different options, improvements, diversification as well as transformation (Christenson *et al*, 1989). It is centred on wealth creation with wealth referring to those things people value, not just money (Shaffer, 1989).

The two terms put together is generally targeted at improving the socio-economic wellbeing as well as environmental conditions of the community, predicated upon participation and cooperation. Community development is described as a process of doing things that bring together local people to identify their shared problems, needs and respond to these utilising local resources knowledge, skills and indigenous knowledge (Walls, 2007). Local cooperation is imperative, in that, it enables – local participation, local decision making,

cooperation, establishment of a sovereign wealth of the locals, that invariably helps in ameliorating inequalities in the community. According to Flobra and Flora (1993), it is an initiative that rely on collectivity to individuality.

### **Structural principles of community development**

The structural principles of community development are articulated in different contexts. For community development to exist locals must be working together to address their shared challenges (Flora *et al*, 1992).

Community development thrives on group working in changing people's economic, social as well as environmental conditions (Christenson *et al*, 1989).

The overall target of community development must be to increase people's choices and ensure an environment where people realise their full potential in leading productive lives (Ron Shaffer, 2009).

The question of unity is crucial in community engagement that would result in community development.

Shakeholders participation is critical in empowerment as well as community development.

Community development is strengthened by the collective influence of local people's commitment and the resources channelled towards responding to their identified problems and opportunities (Aspen Institute, 2000).

Community development must be driven by the passion as well as the enthusiasm of the local people.

Participation in decision making and implementation forms the basis of community development. Equal opportunities to participate must be given to all (Eklund, 1999).

External stakeholders and resources should be mobilised for the purposes of working with local people instead of working for them or just providing services on advisory capacity. divulge

Belief, enthusiasm and commitment form the fuel that propels the process of community development (Wenger, 2013).

## **ANALYSIS**

### **CWPs and livelihoods**

All the respondents from the CWPs workers said that the projects contribute to three major social dimensions, namely, employment, poverty alleviation as well as food security. These findings indicate that the CWPs are addressing a number of key socioeconomic constraints.

These finding supports literature that CWPs are an empowerment tool that capacitates people to take part in an active role in the decisions that relate to their respective communities. CWP are helping in providing practical mechanisms that contribute to community empowerment (Muthee, 2010).

### **Impact of the project on livelihoods**

Respondents indicated that they were convinced that the CWP had a marginal positive impact towards the improvement of people's lives and it has to be supported to achieve greater results. People were no longer waiting or travelling to shops and were no longer travelling long distances to buy fresh vegetables. According to the respondents, the CWP had managed to satisfy community vegetable needs and there were signs that living conditions are changing for the better for the community in general. This was demonstrated by instances when community members were said to place orders for vegetables when they hold family and other social events.

Findings on CWPs and livelihoods supports the literature that a livelihood must be means of securing the basic necessities of life such as food, water, shelter and clothing. Livelihood is about making a living. Niehof and Price, (2001:07) state that for a sustainable livelihood households need to have the knowledge and skills to enable them to manage a more complex livelihood environment".

Niehof and Price (2001:08) continues by saying livelihood is about activities that people start to provide for their basic needs given the resources and assets available to them and what people do and what they achieve by doing it.

### **Income**

All the interviewed workers received a monthly income of 600 Rand per month from the CWPs and have

managed to use the money to buy food and other household needs. These finding indicate that there are definite benefits for members from participation in the projects and that these are playing a role in addressing the socio-economic aspects of the community. However, the level of satisfaction with the income earned was very low as all the respondents indicated that the income was not sufficient to cover all their basic requirements. An overwhelming majority of 100% (6) of the respondents were not satisfied with the amount of income accrued from the CWPs. The responses of the workers of CWPs reflected extreme dissatisfaction and the result of which contradicts the aspect of sustainability. Sustainability of a project is highly threatened when the workers in the project are dissatisfied (Fisher, 2009).

### **Job creation**

In terms of employment, 40% (2) of the interviewed community members believed that these CWPs had helped a lot in the creation of jobs for people in the area. The remaining 60% (3) of the respondents believed that there is no meaningful job creation considering that the whole project in the area has a total staff complement of 25. These finding on job creation refute the purpose of these CWPs. Although the existence of these CWPs is based on direct employment creation the results are a disappointment. Only 25 part time jobs were created by CWPs in Ntselemanzi. The findings in the study showed a life-span of over 4 years of gardening project with intensive hard work, however, the rewards in terms of the income were not satisfying. The recurrence of such inadequacies will result in demotivation of the youths who are discouraged to seek employment in this area.

### **Economic dimensions**

The respondent workers of CWPs indicated dissatisfaction with regards to the level of income they are receiving from the project. They called for a strong motivation agenda from the government side to improve the income of the project workers. Considering that poverty and unemployment are high in Ntselemanzi community, the involvement of the members of the community in the CWPs was a very positive move. Many of the respondents admitted that the project created

employment (25 jobs currently) for them and that they are able to get some income from the sale of the garden produce. The finding is in agreement with Machete (2004: 4) who suggests that agribusiness is the greatest contributor to household income in rural households with above 40% of the total household income generated from agriculture.

### **Social dimensions**

The social aspect in this study was informed by the overall community support towards individuals involved in the CWP. It is vital to note that in terms of gender composition of the CWP workers, 80% females were taking part in the CWPs. This is in line with a study by FAO (1985:241) which indicated that women play an important role in agriculture projects world over.

It was clearly indicated during the interviews that the CWP has moved beyond being 'an employment safety net' and plays a vital role in addressing a variety of challenges faced by the community like crime in the community and enhancing community nutrition standards. In addition, the CWP provides ex-offenders with an opportunity to be reintegrated into society. The CWP if it's implemented to full blown scale it is perceived to have a positive impact on the youths, discouraging them from involving themselves in crime. The CWP is facilitating the emergence of a spirit of solidarity and unity among community members as they work jointly for the same cause. This has assisted in strengthening of social bonds and fostering an attitude of mutual assistance. The CWP is a critical initiative to avert the employment crisis thereby reducing crime and violence which are major concerns for the Ntselemanzi community.

One of the key findings from the community members was the creation of social cohesion by the CWP in the community. The programme instils in individuals that required sense of belonging to the community and the feeling by the individual that they are being recognised as members of that same community. This is in agreement with Philip (2011) who argues that one of the unintended consequences of CWP is the facilitation of social relations between CWP participants in the community. One of the interviewed workers in the study asserted that CWP

is promoting the spirit of ubuntu between the participants who are providing each other with support.

These findings supports the prevailing literature which articulates that for community development to exist locals must be working together to address their shared challenges (Flora *et al.*, 1992). Community development thrives on group working in changing people's economic, social as well as environmental conditions (Christenson *et al.*, 1989). The overall target of community development must be to increase people's choices and ensuring an environment where people realise their full potential in leading productive lives (Ron Shaffer, 2009).

### **Food security**

Respondents indicated that the CWP is playing a very pivotal role in enhancing food security of the community via their produce as well as the income to workers. This finding is in line with the policy rationale for all other public employment programmes which aims at providing the participants with incomes allowing them to address the most unpleasant ravages of poverty like hunger (Harod, 2014). In the Ntselemanzi CWP, the reduction in hunger is derived not only from generated income by workers but includes the garden produce that is sold to the larger community. Quoted below are some findings from the interviewed workers that indicate the crucial role the CWP is playing in enhancing food security.

The CWP is helping us because even when one doesn't have money for vegetables they come and get vegetables and pay later. (Worker, CWP).

I am one of the CWP workers here; we are involved in gardening planting different vegetables. These vegetables we are producing help a lot, particularly to the community members who are sick and are required to have these fresh and nutritious vegetables. We are happy to see our people, including the sick, getting fresh nutritious vegetables from our works. Most of these people are not employed and are getting social grants which are very low and do not cover all their requirements (Worker, CWP).

### **CWP and local economic development**

The incomes that are earned in CWP act as an important injection of resources into the local economy of Alice.

They provide a form of stimulus that strengthens the local market and trickles up to the wider economy. The reality that the CWP is ongoing with regular incomes also enhances the extent for this in supporting of local enterprise development as it provides a predictable and ongoing local consumption spending. Local procurement of tools and materials by the CWP is strengthening the local economy and is creating multiplier effects that are benefiting other local producers.

### **Challenges faced by CWPs**

All of the respondents cited theft of their produce as one of the major impediments to progress and it is the biggest challenge that the CWP is facing in the community under investigation. These finding provides a clear picture of lack of security at the project cite of the CWPs in Ntselemanzi. It is one of the factors seriously limiting the income that is generated from the CWPs project.

### **Perceptions of respondents on the aims of the project**

According to the respondents, the project is supplying the community with different kinds of affordable vegetables and greatly contributing to their nutritional needs. The respondents however, claim that the CWP did unfortunately not exist long enough to have achieved its targeted objectives because of the challenges faced during implementation. Project members then start to lose direction and some members are quitting.

### **Perceptions on the appropriateness of the project**

All of the interviewed respondents (100%) were of the view that the project is very appropriate for the community. There exists some consensus among the respondents that despite the challenges being faced by the project it still remains the right project for the community and it's also contributing meaningfully to the lives of the people.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

The CWP in Ntselemanzi is faced with numerous challenges associated with theft and lack of morale among participant due to low levels of income. There is need to

address these challenges for the CWPs to be sustainable and be able to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of the participants and the community at large. The reasons for the establishment of CWPs are job creation and the poverty alleviation. Ntselemanzi area is one of the poverty stricken areas in Alice. The above analysis of data gathered in this study revealed an impending failure of CWPs if issues to do with motivation of participants are not addressed. CWP members were not highly committed and motivated hence some were leaving projects and some were hesitating to join. The government needs to review the income paid to the participants to encourage youth's involvement in CWPs. There must be investment in training of the participants as the respondents indicated that they were never formally trained in what they are doing. This lack of training as well as lack of exposure to workshops for CWP members is a great impediment to the effectiveness of CWPs in livelihood enhancement.

The government needs to support CWPs until they become independent until they are able to generate income to become sustainable. Hence, Ledwith (2005) described empowerment as not only a way to address inequalities and provision of resources to people to move out of poverty but also giving the essential tools to shape the entire individual and empower a basic state of mind and cognizance. Action should be taken through pushing for transformation at individual, group, community and policy level.

Community involvement should be intensified in such a way that lures especially the youths to be participants in CWPs. There should be good partnership between the community and the government during both the planning and implementation of CWP projects. People with relevant skills or expertise in the project area as well as in financial management should be recruited to serve in these projects. Youth needs to be motivated to take part in CWPs. This is in line with the principle of inclusion of the empowerment theory which asserts that communities should work in ways which does not recognise discrimination and endorse equality and good interrelations between people and strongly not condone exclusion. Encouragement of youths is vital to the building of community empowerment (Moriarty, 2013).



In decision making and other stages this ensures a gain emanating from cross-section of views, know-how and expertise allowing people to learn from each other as they work together (Banard, 2011).

Training workshops should be on-going to empower CWP members with necessary skills. The government must avail enough funds for community CWPs. Mobilisation of funds must remain primarily the role of the government. Community leader's need to be actively involved in monitoring of CWPs. CWPs members should be made aware that CWPs are not established to get them rich and should be motivated to work hard for the growth of the projects

In selecting CWP members there is need to look for volunteers who must sign a contract that to show commitment. CWP committees should be selected by community leaders and involvement of youth should be compulsory. Communities also must work on raising funds to motivate project members for example through buying food parcels for members.

The area under study the CWP has not yet achieved its objectives due to several challenges that have plagued its workability. This paper investigated these challenges and the role of the CWPs. In sum, both the university and the municipality have failed in the responsibility to equip where necessary to improving the living standards of the people of Alice and attracting world class industrialisation and globalisation at a time of knowledge economy.

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